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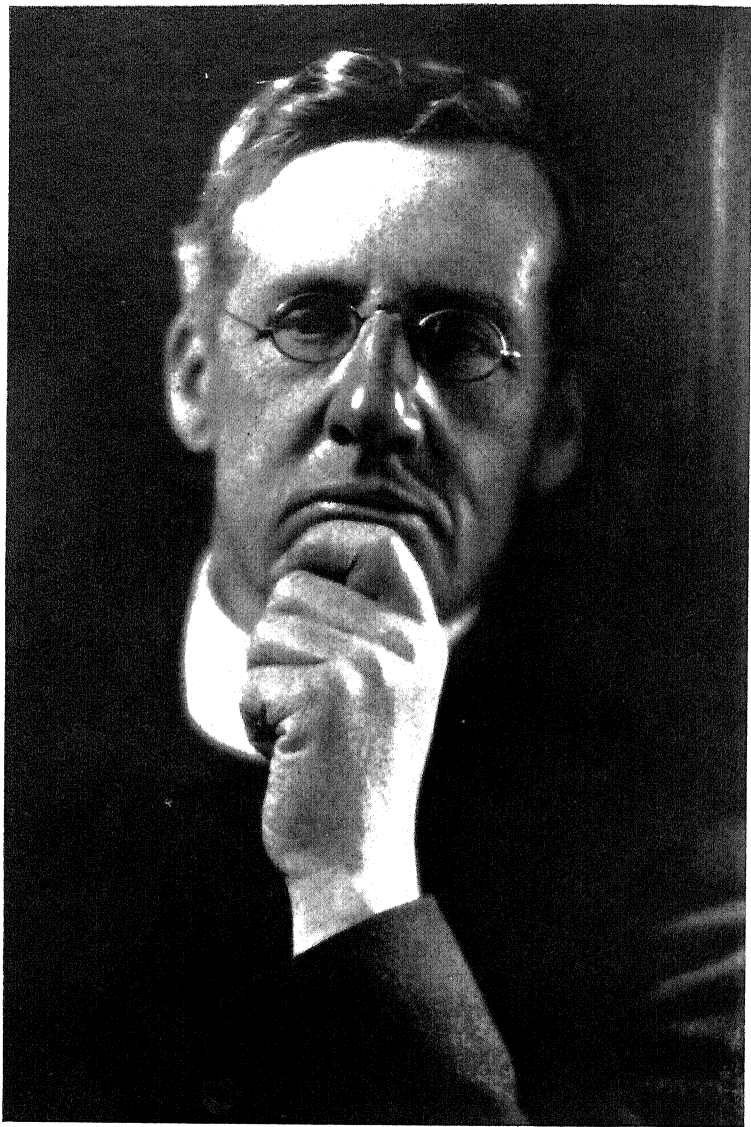
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Aide-de-Camp's Library

PLEASANT PLACES



THE AUTHOR

PLEASANT PLACES

BY

GEORGE A. BIRMINGHAM



*The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant
places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.*

—PSALM XVI, 6



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CHAPTER I

I WAS born in Belfast and brought up to believe that, like St. Paul, I am a citizen of no mean city. I am still of that opinion, though my experiences of men and cities has taught me that the rest of the world has not nearly such a high opinion of Belfast, as Belfast has of itself. Yet, even after many wanderings in other lands, I cannot help thinking that Belfast's self-confidence is justifiable and that the rest of the world is wrong in the estimate it forms of us. We used to boast and I daresay still do boast, that we possessed the largest ship-building yard, the largest spinning mill, the largest tobacco factory, and the longest rope walk in the United Kingdom, perhaps even in the world. These things are surely legitimate sources of pride. Dublin, which we despised as well as disliked, has nothing to show for itself except Guinness's Brewery, and, grievous as would be the loss of that famous drink, the world would get on better without it than it would without the ships, linen, tobacco, and rope. We also believe, and I think with justice, that we walked about our streets with an air of purpose and eager swiftness, very different from the leisurely amble of Dublin people. They, we thought, walked as men stroll who have nothing of any importance to do, and are in no hurry to do it. We were eager about our work and never had a minute to waste when getting to it. If our eagerness resulted in our hustling each other, that was simply a defect of our high qualities and a sign of business energy. If our manners were bad—and we

would have admitted a certain abruptness—that was a sign of our sincerity and contempt for affectation. After all, very suave manners must be insincere and, probably, a waste of time. God had in fact given us that good conceit of ourselves for which some Scotchman is supposed to have prayed.

Of all the cities I know, Chicago most nearly resembles Belfast in self-confidence and fierce energy. But Chicago went further than we did. The very first morning I spent there I attended a public meeting in which the Mayor or some such potentate prophesied, amid applause, that in a very few years Chicago would be the world's centre of music, literature and art. (That was in 1913 and the cynical observer will note that it is not on these gentle graces that Chicago's fame rests to-day.) Belfast never aspired to anything in the way of culture. Indeed I think, we rather despised music, literature and art as merely frills, decorative perhaps, but unsuited to our ferocious energy.

Looking back now I discover another source of pride in my native city. She and she alone of the cities in these islands has succeeded in defying successfully the might of the Imperial Parliament. Belfast brought to naught the well-conceived Home Rule scheme of the greatest Liberal Government of modern times and did this by the simple expedient of repeating doggedly: "We'll not have it." Belfast was quite convinced that it was enough to say that, and in the end such determination must prevail. When the puzzled Liberals refused to believe that Belfast meant what it said, thinking that "we'll not have it" was only part of a familiar game of politics, Belfast swore a solemn covenant, imported arms, drilled, trained men and threatened a civil war. In the end Belfast got its way, or



THE AUTHOR AT THE AGE OF TWO

rather prevented other people from getting their way, without actual bloodshed. But that was only because the Germans were beforehand in making war, and the military spirit of Northern Ireland was satisfied with supplying to the allied cause an Ulster division to fight in France, while well-organised factories turned out the material for aeroplane wings at home.

I think it is worth noting this characteristic pride of Belfast, because my share of it saved me all through my life from what it is the fashion to call an inferiority complex. No citizen of Belfast, no one who has breathed from his birth the atmosphere of that city, can ever feel himself uncomfortably inferior to anybody else in the world. We may perhaps be arrogant and disagreeable, though I think we try to conceal our pride, but we never suffer, as many other people appear to suffer, from the misery of self-distrust.

If I may adopt St. Paul's distinction between the Jerusalem which now is and that Jerusalem above, which he claimed as his mother, I may fairly claim to have been born, not only into the city of shipyards, spinning mills and hideous buildings but into the spiritual community of which the Belfast on the Lagan is the antitype. One of my earliest recollections is of a lesson I received from a very aged but still indomitable clergyman, Dr. Drew, who in his day was the leader of the North of Ireland Orangemen. He was in my father's study when I was brought to him, a tiny boy with long yellow curls, in which my mother rejoiced, but of which I was bitterly ashamed, dressed as small boys were in those days in petticoats. Dr. Drew took me on his knee and taught me to say over and over again: "No Pope, no Priest, no surrender, Hurrah." My infant

lips, so my father used to tell me, could get no nearer to pronouncing the words than "Peest" and "Hender," but I seem to have imbibed the spirit. From that day on I never escaped from it. The words, so we believed, were the cry of the 'prentice boys of Derry when they shut the gates of their city against the approaching army of King James and then through a long siege defended it, unaided, against the most famous professional and experienced soldiers of the time. They made good their defiance of trained armies and experienced generals. Derry never surrendered and the spirit of her defenders has been an inspiration for Protestants of the north of Ireland ever since. The story of the siege of Derry was no doubt an encouragement to those volunteers of 1913 who hoped to make good their defence against such part of the English army as might be willing to fight them.

I was never an Orangeman and for a great part of my life have been in opposition to the political opinions held so firmly by my fellow Protestants of Northern Ireland, but the spirit of defiance and detestation of authority which inspired them has remained with me. Dr. Drew's lesson was not given in vain to the curly-headed little boy whom he took on his knee. In Belfast in those days we took our religion very seriously indeed. I can remember sitting after dinner while my father and an uncle discussed the Franco-Prussian War. I was about five years old at the time, but I still recollect the very curious line their talk took. They were both in full sympathy with the French and opposed to the Prussians. But they were uneasy and puzzled; France was a Roman Catholic country whereas Prussia was as Protestant as Belfast. It distressed and worried my father and uncle to find that their sympathy

was with a nation which acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope and that they disliked a power which rejected it. This seemed to them unnatural. It was a puzzling thing, and though, no doubt, they found some way out of their difficulty, I have no idea what it was. I repeat this story simply to show the strength of the spirit of Protestantism in which I was brought up.

It must always be remembered that in the north of Ireland, indeed throughout the whole of Ireland, the word Protestant in those days meant strictly churchman. The prevalent religions were divided into Papists, Protestants and Presbyterians; the Presbyterians not being regarded as Protestants in our numeration of faiths. The Church of Ireland was the Protestant Church and alone had the right to use the word Protestant. On the one side of it were Papists and on the other side Presbyterians and Methodists. In the middle were what in England would be called Anglicans which we called, and still do call, simply Protestants, meaning by the word, members of the Anglican Communion. But our Protestantism was different in quality from anything of the kind which exists in England. We pronounced the word as if its third consonant was a D, thereby giving it an explosiveness and an obstinacy which no religion in England has possessed since the days of Cromwell's Ironsides.

I remember another after-dinner discussion, a long one, between my father and my maternal grandfather, William Wynne, rector of Moira. I must have been about the same age as when I heard my father and uncle talking about the Franco-Prussian War, for the subject this time was the disestablishment of the Irish church, just accomplished by Mr. Gladstone. My grandfather was of the opinion that

the number of the Beast in the book of Revelation worked out, if the figures were properly understood, to the name William Ewart Gladstone. He took the letters of the great statesman's name, gave them numerical value, and, as well as I can recollect, added them together and arrived at the conclusion that the Liberal leader who had laid profane hands on the ark of the covenant was the beast foreseen by St. John, who set his evil mark on the foreheads of men. This grandfather was a member of an old though scarcely distinguished Anglo-Irish family. As country gentlemen of importance they had sat in the Irish Parliament for a century and had produced soldiers and divines for the service of their country. They had, I think, only two claims to real distinction. They were a subject for Swift's satire. He wrote of the Irish Parliament of his day that in it "humdrum Wynne sat surrounded by his kin." And the Owen Wynne of the 1800 remained uncorrupted and through the whole period of the passing of the Union, voted steadily for the independence of the Irish Parliament and thereby missed his chance of getting a peerage for the family. He must have been, in his obstinacy and lack of political intelligence, thoroughly representative of the aristocratic Protestants of the ascendancy.

My grandfather not only had the pride and determination, but also the sporting spirit of his class and family. I can recollect him showing me a game cock which he kept at Moira Rectory, and explaining its points of excellence. Whether he actually fought the bird or not I do not know, but I am sure he would have enjoyed doing so. He kept, I remember, a fierce bull terrier which followed him about his parish, biting whom it could get at. He took a great deal of trouble in reconciling me to this creature and

teaching me not to be afraid of it. Like most country dwellers he was weatherwise, relying a good deal for his forecasts on the appearance of the moon. "That," he said to my father once, "is a good moon, a first-rate moon, and let me tell you, Robert, that I'm a difficult man to please in moons." He lived a blameless and, apart from politics, a peaceful life. One of his major troubles was a parish clerk who could not be induced to pronounce the word *Leviathan* correctly. In those days the Psalms were not sung in the country churches, but read aloud, verse about, by the clergyman and the parish clerk. It was considered bad form on the part of the congregation to interfere with the reading of the clerk, just as it would have been bad form to take the clergyman's part for him. My grandfather never could persuade this clerk to put the accent in *Leviathan* on the antepenultimate and the mispronunciation worried him as much as the B.B.C.'s announcer's accent does other excellent people to-day. In the end he adopted the plan of changing the day of the month on the Sunday on which *Leviathan* occurred in the Psalms. This must have been a serious inconvenience to the villagers, who were insufficiently supplied with calendars and calculated their dates from the Psalms read in church on Sunday. But my grandfather would have willingly upset the date system of the whole of County Down rather than submit to the continual mispronunciation of that sea monster. He was a snuff addict and was so given over to the habit that he could not get through his Sunday services without an occasional sniff under the pretence, which deceived nobody, that he was blowing his nose. Besides his detestation of Mr. Gladstone, he had one other enthusiasm: religious education. About this he felt

very strongly. On one occasion when my father was preaching a sermon in support of Church Schools, my grandfather interrupted the discourse by clapping his hands loudly and shouting: "Hear, hear, Robert. Hear, hear."

I was little more than a child when he died, but his hatred of Gladstone and Liberalism must have somehow impressed itself on me. In the course of a fairly long life I have tried almost every kind of politics, having been a Socialist, a sound Conservative, a Jingo Imperialist and an Irish Nationalist. The one thing which I have never been able even to sympathise with is English Liberalism, though some of my best friends in after-life professed this political creed. I can only suppose that my grandfather gave my mind a twist in my early childhood which has never straightened itself out. But it does not matter now, for I have long abjured all politics. Like the courtier in Tennyson's poem:

"I've had my day and my philosophies."

And have come to feel with Doctor Johnson:

"How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
Our own felicity we make or find."

Belfast in those days was a city as unlovely outwardly as the character of its people appeared to be to the rest of the world. It possessed, as well as I can recollect, only two public monuments. One of them was a clock tower erected in honour of the Prince Consort, Albert the Good. The other was a black statue to the memory of a Presbyterian

divine called Dr. Cook. The Albert Memorial, as it was called, was a dignified but uninspiring tower, with a clock which set the time for the town. The black statue of Dr. Cook I can only recollect as hideous. The public buildings were wholly unattractive and generally ugly. The parish church of St. Anne's of which my father was vicar for many years was a respectable Georgian building with some beautiful old polished mahogany, but architecturally quite uninteresting. It has now disappeared to make room for a new cathedral. For sentimental reasons I regret its loss; but though I loved it, I never supposed it had any beauty. The old Linen Hall, now alas, gone, would not have been out of place in a fifth-rate provincial town, though even there not a source of pride. During my boyhood there was a great deal of church-building in Belfast, to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing population. As well as I can recollect every new church was mean and ugly. The only public library was in the old Linen Hall and was rather a poor affair. But I ought not to speak ill of it, for it was a great help to me. There was a reading-room, which, looking back, seems always to have been empty. There I spent many an hour reading Swinburne's works and Morris's *Earthly Paradise*. It was the only place where I could get the more recent English poets. No one else ever seemed to want them. I could take them as often and keep them as long as I chose. I suppose that the library was supported by subscribers and that my father was one of them. But I have often wondered since who in Belfast was willing to spend money, even public money, on the works of Swinburne and Morris.

The Ulster Hall was the chief, indeed the only large hall in Belfast at that time. In it were held political meetings

and it was there that Lord Randolph Churchill made his famous "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right" speech. In it also were held the large balls given by mayors to such Lord-Lieutenants as paid visits to Belfast, to the officers of the Channel Fleet when it anchored in the Lough, and such-like people whom it was desirable to honour.

I cherish a recollection of one particular ball given in the honour of a visit from Lord Spencer, then Lord-Lieutenant. All "society," as we understood the word in Belfast, was invited and joyfully accepted the invitation. Unfortunately, three days before the Viceregal visit serious trouble arose. Lord Spencer felt it necessary to forbid the holding of certain political meetings in County Monaghan. Lord Rossmore, the leader of the local Orangemen, took no notice of the injunction and held a meeting of the most clamorously loyal kind. Lord Spencer suffered from that curious belief in even-handed justice which has haunted all Liberals in Ireland. As Irishmen understand justice it means standing up for your friends and cracking the heads of your enemies on every possible occasion. Lord Spencer, in pursuance of the Liberal idea, degraded Lord Rossmore from his position as Justice of the Peace, an action which was loudly applauded by the Nationalists, who understood it to mean that he had joined their ranks. It made Belfast furious. There was a hastily convened mass meeting in the Botanic Gardens, at which, among others, my father and the Rev. R. R. Kane made speeches, reasserting in unmistakable language their unalterable loyalty to the Queen, but advising that her representative, Lord Spencer, should be severely boycotted when he came to Belfast. "Society" at once resolved not to attend the ball

and the populace made up its mind to make things very unpleasant for anyone who did. I was very young at the time and very keen on dancing. I saw no reason why I should miss a ball because Lord Spencer had quarrelled with Lord Rossmore. I determined to be one of those young people who were described by Dr. Kane as "so dead to all sense of honour as to set pleasure above patriotism."

After Dr. Kane's oration to the crowd in the Botanic Gardens, public feeling ran very strong against the ball. When the evening came we drove along a street lit by torches and flares, and lined on each side by an angry mob which was only prevented attacking the carriages by mounted police who careered up and down keeping the yelling crowd back. We felt like French aristocrats during the Terror on their way to the guillotine.

Before I was old enough for balls or political meetings, I knew the Ulster Hall chiefly as the scene of periodical concerts of the Belfast Philharmonic Society, to which I was taken, or sent, in the hope, I suppose, of teaching me to love music. There I listened unwillingly to some Wagner and most of the famous oratorios. I found myself in entire agreement with my father who flatly refused to attend these performances, saying that it outraged his sense of decency to see the prophet Elijah in white kid gloves. My own chief objection to these performances, apart from their wearisome length, was that I nearly always sat next a young man, otherwise a nice fellow, who used to say with a critical air that the third trombone in the second row of the orchestra, or some other similar instrument, was playing half a tone flat. I never believed—and after long association with musical people I do not now believe—that

he really knew this. He only said it to show off and annoy me.

The theatre in Belfast was frowned on when I was a boy, and to see a play there was regarded as a sin. My father was liberal-minded beyond most of his fellow clergy and he never objected to my going to the theatre, though he asked me to do so as unostentatiously as possible, lest I should create a scandal. My first introduction to the theatre was through the good offices of Mr. Walter Wilson, a partner in the shipbuilding firm of Harland and Wolff, who married my first cousin, Lily Wynne. He was a lover of the stage and went to see all the good plays, and a good many of the bad ones which were performed in the Belfast Theatre Royal. Perhaps my father had warned him too. He always went to the theatre furtively. Though he possessed a brougham of his own he never used it in going to the theatre, but hired a carriage from a jobbing stable. He did this partly out of respect to the feelings of his mother, an old lady of strong Puritan feeling, who would certainly have found out if his horses were used for such a purpose, and partly so as to avoid corrupting the morals of the coachman. It is rather curious to remember that when the Theatre Royal was burnt down, the Ulster Hall was hired and a temporary stage fixed up on which plays were performed. The reputation of the Ulster Hall for respectability was so firmly established by the philharmonic concerts and political meetings, that it was not felt wrong to see a play there, and it became a joke among the profane that even the Presbyterian ministers flocked to see plays performed in the Ulster Hall, although they would have excommunicated one of their number who entered the doors of a theatre. When the theatre was rebuilt they once

more abstained from seeing plays. I can only hope that their temporary experience of the stage in the Ulster Hall broadened their minds a little. But I suppose it did not. It takes more than mere experience to open the doors of a mind locked by religious prejudices.

Children in those days were forbidden to do anything likely to amuse them on Sundays and their reading was confined to the Bible or books dealing with it. Here again my father's practice was in advance of his time and surroundings. He even recommended the *Pilgrim's Progress* for Sunday reading, although I think that most people would have regarded it as too exciting for the sacred day. My father's liberality was no doubt due to the fact that he was a real lover of literature. He was a great student of Shakespeare and as a young man before his ordination had seen most of his plays performed. I can well remember his discussing with me a performance which I had seen of *Richard III* in which Barry Sullivan played the chief part. I told him, as well as I could, how the great lines were spoken and he told me in return how the actors of his day mouthed Colley Cibber's famous interpolation—"Off with his head. So much for Buckingham."

My father was also a lover of Scott and taught me to take a delight in the Waverley Novels, a delight which never failed me in after-life. I still read Scott's novels with greater pleasure than any other books. This great love of Scott was hereditary. My father had it from his father, and it is that grandfather's edition of the novels which I still read. I am glad to think that, after skipping a generation, it is coming out again in my grand-daughter, though I fear our family edition will be read to tatters before she gets it.

It was from my father that I learnt to love English poetry, and I have not in after-life met any one who had a knowledge of Milton superior to his. He was not fond of any poetry later than Wordsworth, though he sometimes read Tennyson. I can remember his bringing home from a tour abroad some volumes of Browning in the Tauchnitz edition. I do not think he liked them much, although he sometimes quoted "Christmas Eve and Easter Day." The volumes passed into my possession and I spent some of my early pocket money in getting them bound. One of them at least remains in my possession and my love of Browning and the knowledge of his works date from the day my father brought these books home. There was, as well as I can remember, only one bookseller in Belfast, but his business must have been a solid one, for I found the shop still in the same place carried on under the same name when I revisited Belfast last summer, forty years after I ceased to live there. In that shop I spent a good deal of my pocket money, chiefly on shilling editions of English classics, which were sold after the excellent custom of those days for ninepence. Except for Scott and Thackeray, my father read few novels, but he had an admiration for Trollope, though he was slightly ashamed of it. He regarded the Barchester novels as too popular to be good. Trollope has come into his own since then and even highbrow readers profess to like him. But my father always pretended to despise him a little. I remember him finding me one Sunday afternoon reading *Framley Parsonage* in an old bound-up volume of *Cornhill* in which the story first appeared as a serial. He did not rebuke my Sabbath-breaking, but he did point out that though Trollope was harmless I might be occupying my

time with works of greater literary value. Those were the days in which high-class magazines flourished and I can remember the excited delight of the days on which my father brought home with him the latest numbers of *Macmillan*, *Cornhill* and *Blackwood*. He was a regular subscriber to all these and must have been among the very first readers of *Longman's Magazine* when it appeared with Andrew Lang as one of its principal contributors. In this way, through my father's literary tastes, my home in Belfast was better and more enlightened than I think that of most other boys in my position in that city.

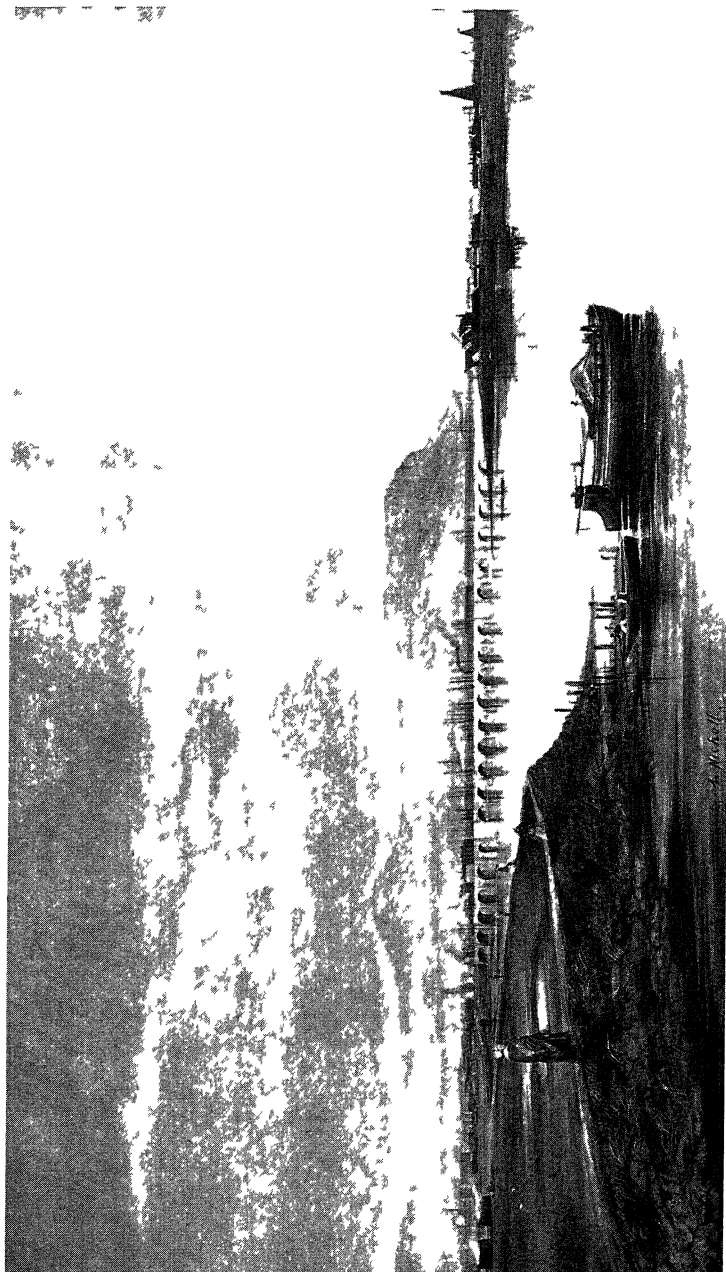
My childhood and boyhood in Belfast were very happy. I was the eldest of a family considered small in those days, for there were only four of us. Next to me came my sister Agnes, who by an odd chance, afterwards became my sister-in-law. Next to her was my brother Bob. After an adventurous career during which he saw most things in the world, including the inside of a gaol in Madagascar, he was killed in the Boer War; he held a commission in one of the bodies of irregular horse. Then, seventeen years younger than I was, came William, now a successful mining engineer in British Columbia.

But if we were few we had as our constant companions a large family of cousins, the children of my father's sister, Marion Hannay, who married Frederick Kinahan. As children we were always together, sharing every kind of fun. In summer we picnicked at Crawfurdsburn, bathed at Clandeboyne and built ourselves forts high up among the branches of trees. In winter we gathered round Christmas trees, played riotously at blind man's buff and, fearfully, snapped burning raisins from the dish in front of an awful dragon. We even acted fairy plays, though this was an odd

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concession, for we were not allowed to go to the theatre. I still remember trying to make something of the heavy father part in *Beauty and the Beast* and greatly disliking having to kiss my cousin Emily several times during the performance. As we grew older we put away these childish things and took to dancing and tennis, playing in most of the tournaments though none of us ever excelled at the game. The fellowship and affection survived the inevitable separation which came with our going our own ways in life. Among those of that merry party who have weathered the passing years, the affection still survives.

But there was a part of my boyhood which was not spent in Belfast. My father's favourite place for a holiday was the north coast of County Antrim. He himself had been brought up there as a boy. My paternal grandfather, James Hannay, was a Scot by birth and only settled in Ireland because he married an Irish woman, Miss Mary MacNaghten, who had some property in County Antrim. For many years he lived in a house called Ballylough, near Bushmills, which he rented from the Traills who owned it. It was there that my father was brought up and to that country he loved to return. He considered it his home, as indeed I do. From my earliest days I was taken there. My recollections of my Hannay grandfather are dim. I think of him as a very gentle old man. He must have been fond of me. I can recollect surreptitious helpings of honey given in defiance of my grandmother's prohibition, and how he often played with me for hours. He was a man of literary taste. One of his friends was Charles Lever who used sometimes to stay with him at Ballylough. He was a great reader of Scott and a lover of eighteenth-century poetry. I still have a complete edition of the



BELFAST LOUGH ABOUT A HUNDRED YEARS AGO FROM AN OLD PAINTING

eighteenth-century poets which was in his library. I have always thought it odd that of my two grandfathers, the one who was a clergyman, and the rector of a country parish in County Down, was a keen sportsman, an ardent politician and a good fighter in any cause he believed in; the other who was a soldier and had held a commission in the Rifle Brigade, was gentle, of literary taste and as far as I can recollect without any enthusiasm either for religion or politics.

A favourite haunt of my father's at holiday times was Runkerry, a little rocky cove at the end of a long strand, where there was a boat haven. In those days there were two small cottages above the boat haven, one of which was inhabited by a fisherman called Neil Weir, a very dear friend of my childhood. The other cottage we used to rent for the summer months. This cottage has disappeared. Its place is taken by a great house built by Lord MacNaghten, the younger brother of the Sir Francis MacNaghten of that day who lived near by at Dunderave. The little cove is still a boat haven and up to a few years ago Neil Weir survived. Last summer I went fishing with his son, and in the MacNaghten's house I found his great-grand-daughter, now old enough to be a parlourmaid. So pass the generations and we with them.

Behind Runkerry are cliffs pierced by great caves into which we used to go in boats on calm days. I well remember the sense of awe which came over us in entering the caves, the fading light as we penetrated further into the depths, the rushing noise of the swell against the smooth rocks and the echoing hollow sound of the final crash of the waves breaking far up in the cave. These are unfading memories. In later years when I paid a visit

to Lord MacNaghten in his house at Runkerry I swam into one of these caves in order to recall an adventure of my father's who, when he was a young man, had clambered around the rocks in this cave with a gun in his hand in order to shoot some pigeons which inhabited it. He slipped and fell into the deep water. It was impossible to scramble out again, for the sea-worn rocks were quite smooth. His one chance was to swim back to the opening of the cave where the boat awaited him. This would have been comparatively easy, for he was a good swimmer, if he had not been determined to save his gun, a new one which he valued greatly. He succeeded after great efforts and at considerable risk in saving both himself and the gun. I swam in not only to recall this adventure but to test the possibility of a scene in my novel *The Northern Iron* where the heroine swam into the same cave. For me it was a simple matter. I carried no gun with me and I had nothing to contend with except the surging of the north sea swell and the awesome gloom of the cave.

That country is tourist-haunted now. Even Ballintoy, surely most perilous of all boat havens, has its tea-room, which would be a dreadful desecration if it were not housed in a cottage which was there before the tea, and run by two ladies who have been tuned into harmony by the spirit of the place. I am told that the crossing of the rope bridge at Carrick-a-Rede is now counted as a little thing. But when I was a boy there was a real risk in crossing, for the bridge swung free, far above jagged rocks and breaking waves, without even a handrail. The white rocks at the end of Portrush Strand are, alas! tourist-haunted now, like so much that once was solitary. But they were lonely places when I was young, the scene of adventurous

scramblings at the lowest ebb of spring tides. We used to make expeditions to the Skerry Islands, sailing out there in the powerful fishing-boats which were used on that rough coast. These boats were rigged with two dipping lugs, a form of sail unsuitable for beating to windward. I can remember the business of putting about, at the end of a tack. It was a moment of great excitement to me. As the boat hung head to wind the great sails were lowered and the yards hauled round to the other side of the masts. The change was effected with great quickness while the boat lay head to wind, plunging heavily into the seas. There was a wild confusion of wet canvas, writhing ropes and heavy yard-arms in the boat. We who were passengers were advised to crouch on the floor-boards until the change was complete. In the evenings we used to go lithe-fishing. I have never heard this fish, which is common all round the coast, called by this name anywhere else except off the Antrim coast. We fished for it with long heavily weighted lines and used sand eels for bait. The boat was rowed slowly round the rocks while we trailed our lines overboard ready for the sudden tugging of a hooked fish. Then came the thrilling business of hauling in the line hand over hand, until the swerving fish came into sight, gleaming in the dark water far astern. Sometimes the fish was so large that a gaff had to be used to get it into the boat. One of my early disappointments was that I was seldom allowed to perform the final act of lifting the fish out of the water into the boat. It was always felt that the huge fish would be too much for the strength of a small boy, and I was only allowed to land in the very smallest of my catches.

It was there that my father taught me to swim. He

PLEASANT PLACES

bathed before breakfast every morning. His method of teaching me was simple though unpleasant for me. He used to make me jump into deep water and when I sank, as I did with the utmost regularity, he fished me up again and hauled me on shore. I funked this business horribly, but in the end I did learn to swim. As a young man I was a strong swimmer, though I never learnt the racing strokes which I see used now. It was perhaps thanks to my father's way of teaching that I have never been afraid of plunging even into very rough water. Yet I think our modern and more humane methods with children are better than the methods of those days; and I find that my children who were taught far more gently are no more afraid of the water than I am.

They say that wild animals try to get back to their familiar dens when the time comes for them to die. I should like, when my time comes, to creep back to that storm-swept, treeless coast, and see again before the end the black cliffs and long wave-trampled strands, and hear the half-Scottish, half-Irish speech of Neil Weir's descendants.

Perhaps God will be very kind to me and grant me this.

CHAPTER II

At the age of nine I was sent to a preparatory school, Temple Grove, at East Sheen, Mortlake. The school still exists, but it has been moved out of the Thames valley to Eastbourne, which is no doubt a more healthy locality for small boys. It must be, I think, one of the oldest preparatory schools in existence. I have a print of a picture of the school at Mortlake dedicated to one of the masters and the "noblemen and gentlemen" who were educated there. The print was published in 1818 and as it was dedicated to the past pupils, the school must have been in existence for some time before that.

The headmaster in my time was Mr. O. C. Waterfield, whom we called the Cow and held a curious tradition that when he became a schoolmaster he altered the order of his initials with a view to avoiding this nickname, which he particularly dreaded. Originally, according to our theory, he was C. O. Waterfield. I am sure that no such an idea ever occurred to him, but if he had made the change we suspected in the order of his initials it was quite useless. He was always known as the Cow. I think he was a good schoolmaster. He certainly enjoyed some fame in his day, for when I went to Haileybury and did a particularly bad bit of Latin prose in my entrance examination, Dr. Bradby, the headmaster, expressed his surprise that such a poor piece of latinism should come from one of Waterfield's boys. He was one of the old breed of schoolmasters who believed whole-heartedly in

the birch as an instrument of education. I do not know that I had more of it than other boys, but I can distinctly recollect being operated on three times in one term. We had a theory, probably entirely without foundation, that a fourth birching in one term carried with it the further penalty of expulsion. This was a dreadful possibility and I tried hard to keep out of trouble for the rest of that term. There was a bedroom known as number twenty-two set apart for these executions which were always carried out just before our midday dinner. Waterfield had a cold-blooded and rather gruesome plan of saving up his victims until he had half a dozen under sentence. Then the school porter went round to the various classes and informed those who were to suffer that they were to go up to room twenty-two immediately after morning school. By the time the birching was finished the rest of the school had sat down to dinner and we used to march into the dining-hall behind Mr. Waterfield under the eyes of one hundred and twenty or so of our schoolfellows. The idea, I suppose, was that we should feel our disgrace acutely. My recollection is that we felt rather heroic, and fragments of birch picked up on the floor after Waterfield had left the room were valuable souvenirs. As we entered the dining-room we were expected to hold up fingers to show how many strokes we had received. He was indeed a proud boy who could hold up all fingers of both hands. In after-life I have heard a great deal of talk about this business of birching and its effects upon the boys who endured it, and parents, especially of the poorer classes, seem to regard it with horror. In my boyhood parents thought it was good for their sons and were rather pleased to hear that

we got plenty of it. It was not only moral faults or wanton mischief which incurred the penalty. I once suffered for having failed to do a long division sum. Whether I did my arithmetic any better afterwards I cannot recollect. Probably not, for even to this day I am very bad at figures. The pain was not excessive and was quite compensated for by the pride with which we afterwards exhibited our honourable scars to an admiring circle of friends. The feeling of personal humiliation, about which so much is said, I have never experienced at all. There was no more humiliation about being birched than there was about being given six copies to write, one of Waterfield's milder forms of punishment. But perhaps I was insensitive in the matter of personal dignity. Other boys may have felt humiliated; I can only say that if they did they never mentioned it.

Waterfield had an excellent system of putting a new boy in charge of one of the older boys of the school for his first term. My mentor was Ronald McNeill, now Lord Cushendun, who was at that time head of the school. He was chosen to look after me, I suppose, because we were both north of Ireland boys and so presumably in some sympathy with each other. I do not remember that McNeill ever did anything for me except save me on one occasion from being hammered by a boy, bigger and stronger than I was, but much smaller than Ronald McNeill, who was then and still is of more than common height and strength. I do not suppose that the bullying was anything in the least serious, but I do remember that I was a good deal frightened. I daresay I deserved what I was getting for cheek or some similar offence. The boy from whom Ronald McNeill saved me is now canon of one

of our cathedrals. I met him, many years after we had both left Temple Grove, on the occasion of the marriage of a niece of his to a cousin of mine. I found him waiting for me in the vestry of St. Margaret's, Westminster, before the ceremony. I had been wondering whether he would look as formidable as when I had last seen him. I was a little disappointed and perhaps relieved to find a venerable, gentle and obviously amiable man in the place of the threatening bully of my recollection. So life subdues us, chastening our natural ferocity.

I was honoured two or three years ago with an invitation from the present headmaster, another Waterfield, and a relative of my headmaster, to distribute the prizes for athletic sports at the present Temple Grove. I found that during the move the old school desks, including the very one in which I used to keep white mice, had been preserved and I still recognised some of the names cut on them. My own name, though I certainly cut it, had disappeared. But I daresay the cutting was very badly done, for I never had any artistic talent. On the other hand, I recognised the name of a friend of mine, Dermod O'Brien, who had cut his in large Gothic letters and done it very well. He has since become the President of the Royal Hibernian Academy. I suppose that the artistic talent must have shown itself in him very early. Long afterwards he painted my portrait and it hung one year among others of more note in Burlington House. There was a time, after Ronald McNeill and his cousin John had both left school, when there were only three Irish boys there: Dermod O'Brien, Arthur Cane, and myself. We were fairly representative of our country. Dermod O'Brien had descended from the old Celtic aristocracy and his grand-

father, William O'Brien, was one of the heroes of the Young Ireland rebellion in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was a futile rebellion, though O'Brien was none the less a heroic figure. Arthur Cane belonged to the Anglo-Irish settler class, the men who in time became *Hibernis Ipsis Hiberniores*. I came from the Protestant, half-Scottish north. But however we might have differed from each other at home we became friends and allies as fellow Irishmen in the midst of a group of alien English people. Emily Lawless in one of her fine but almost unknown poems described the situation of such Irishmen:

"Leaping to greet at a distance,
Set in the death grips at home."

Our friendship was not wholly unbroken, even at school. Dermot O'Brien told me many years afterwards that one of his most vivid recollections was of a fight with me. This had totally passed out of my memory and even after he had told me about it I could not recollect it. I suppose it was only one of many, for the small boy is naturally a pugnacious animal. Fights at Temple Grove were no mere casual scraps. They were more like the duels of our grandfathers, carried out with formalities and a certain dignity. They were of two kinds: The "face fight," a kind of duel *à l'outrance* in which you were allowed to damage your opponent as best you could by hitting him on the nose, eyes, mouth or anywhere else you chose; and a milder kind of duel in which you were allowed only to hit on the body, though of course never below the belt. These fights took place in the big school before morning prayers and were the only things which ever got us out of bed before

the last possible moment. On the morning of a fight we were all dressed and downstairs half an hour before prayer time. My fight with O'Brien was one of the serious "face fight" kind, but neither he nor I can recollect what the cause of it was. Fighting, like birching, seems to have gone out of fashion now. I suppose that it, too, is regarded as brutal and degrading, as I daresay it is.

Among our masters was a Mr. Geoghan, one of the best schoolmasters I have ever known. He had only one arm, having lost the other in some kind of accident. He wrote left-handed and always used a violet ink of a peculiar shade. He was known to us all with affection and respect as Geege. Anything I was taught in that school he taught me, but I am afraid that it was not much. It was through him that I won the only prize I ever did win, though unfortunately I was not allowed to receive it. It was for knowledge of Holy Scripture and was awarded for the best marks gained in an examination at the end of the term. We learned what we called "divinity" every morning out of a book, "MacClear's Old Testament History," and Geege was most particular about this lesson. He had a rule that every boy who failed to answer moderately well in class was kept in and made learn the Kings of Israel, or whatever else it was, so thoroughly that he could answer every question put to him. It was my hard lot to be kept in every morning through one whole term. The result was that when the examination time came I knew more about the Old Testament history than any other boy, for no one else had been kept in more than ten or twelve times. In dealing with the examination papers, I scored heavily. Mr. Waterfield, knowing the way in which I had acquired my knowledge, refused to give me the prize. I

had a sense of injustice at the time which rankled for years afterwards. But looking back on the incident now I am inclined to think that Waterfield was right. A prize ought not to be won through continual idleness, especially a prize for Holy Scripture, which should have some effect in the way of "uplift."

Games were not organised in those days as they are now and I do not think that there was any compulsion. We played if we liked and refused to play if we didn't want to, and this is a sane way of treating what is supposed to be a pleasure. The one game which was treated seriously was cricket, and even it only among boys who showed some aptitude for it. They received instruction from a professional. The rest of us played much as we liked and without supervision. Football was quite informal. We played according to rules of our own, which I have never seen used anywhere else. You were allowed to pick up the ball and run with it as in Rugby, but only if you caught it full pitch or after a single hop. Otherwise you kicked it as in Association. I remember playing the game with great vigour when every player on both sides was suffering from mumps and had his head tied up in a handkerchief. This seems now to show a certain carelessness among the authorities, who ought to have looked after us, perhaps kept us in bed when so afflicted. Certainly they should not have let us play football. Yet I cannot remember that any harm came to any of us. Someday, perhaps, the medical profession will discover that football is good for mumps. One never knows with doctors when, in their search for the novel, they will go back to take something very old indeed, something long denounced as barbarous.

We had other games which we played also without supervision, deciding by acclamation whether the sport was to be "chivvy" or "hoppy." And there was a delightful game which we played only on summer evenings called Warning.

My career at Temple Grove was quite undistinguished either in work or play. Indeed, it was rather worse than undistinguished. In going over my father's papers after his death, I found that he had preserved all my early school reports. They must have been most disappointing reading for him, for the last of them summed up my character with an incisiveness which must have been satisfactory to Mr. Waterfield, if not to my father. At the end of a very inferior list of marks in various subjects, Mr. Waterfield wrote: "Hannay is incurably lazy." I have, I am sorry to say, only too good a reason to suppose that Waterfield was right, indeed righter than he knew, for that same laziness has been my besetting sin through life. I have always been most unwilling to do anything I could possibly avoid, and can only be stirred into activity by strong goading.

After Temple Grove I went to Haileybury, and had an equally undistinguished career there. So far as work was concerned I managed to keep out of the reach of a superannuation rule under which a boy's parents were politely invited to take him away if he did not attain a fixed standard by a certain age. I never sank so low as that, but, on the other hand, I never showed any signs of ability or diligence. I was very little better at games, and my name does not, I am sorry to say, adorn the boards which bear lists of the past heroes of the first eleven or the first fifteen.

When I went to Haileybury the conditions of life for boys were hard, though perhaps wholesomely bracing. The school stands high up and I think it must always be cold there in winter. At the beginning of my first term, England was in the grip of a severe frost. I can distinctly recollect taking my sponge to bed with me, the only means of preventing it being frozen into a hard stone when I wanted to use it next morning. The form room which I was supposed to occupy out of school hours was lighted only by a skylight and was approached by descending three steps from the level of the quadrangle outside. It was a room which would not be tolerated in the meanest parochial school to-day. But I could not even use it as a sheltering habitation or seek warmth from its fire. The older boys in the form, one of them in particular, made the lives of smaller boys a perfect hell to them. I came too late into public school life to experience the full rigour of the bullying which used to go on, the sort of thing described in *Tom Brown*, which certainly persisted long after his time. But even in my day the lives of small and weak boys were made desperately unpleasant for them. There were humiliating tortures to which we were submitted if we ventured to put our noses inside the form-room, where we had a perfect right to go. The result was that during that first bitterly cold term I spent most of my hours out of school in walking forlornly round and round the quadrangle in the company of others as unfortunate as myself. All that term I think I must have been unhappy, for, years afterwards, I came across some verses I wrote at the time. They were very doleful, so I suppose I must have been suffering a good deal when I wrote them. A boy of fourteen—or indeed a man of any

age—does not write poetry if he is reasonably content with life. I do not look back to my schooldays with that retrospective rapture which some men feel, or at all events profess to feel, when they are making speeches at prize-givings, but on the whole I was not unhappy at Haileybury. My housemaster, the Rev. F. B. Butler, was always particularly kind to me. He was in many ways an unusual and remarkable man. He had very little power of discipline and overdid the system of relying on our honour, a thing which is almost lacking in most schoolboys. He was always ready to take a boy's word for any statement, no matter how improbable it sounded, and I fear that we often escaped punishment by saying things which, if not formally lies, were very far from being the truth. Butler believed anything we said without questioning. He was a man of antiquarian tastes. He had a passion for taking rubbings of old brasses. He used to display them with considerable pride, but I never remember his explaining what they were, and I carried away only the faintest impression of where they came from and what they represented. He was also a great Shakespearian and a lover of the older English poets. It was, I think, through his influence that English literature at Haileybury was first recognised as a serious subject for study. There came a time, suddenly in the middle of a term, when we were allowed to choose between English literature and Latin verse. Perhaps our parents were given some say in the matter, but my impression is that we were left free to make our own choice. I had no particular dislike of Latin verse, which I could write fairly easily with the aid of a book called *Gradus ad Parnassum*, a most useful volume which gave synonyms for any word you chose to look out, and all the epithets which could be

applied to any noun. But though I was fairly expert in the use of the Gradus, I chose to give up my Latin verse and take English literature instead. It seemed to me the line of least resistance and I believed I knew more about it to start with than most of my fellows. This belief, which turned out to be erroneous, was based on an incident in class. Butler, at that time my form-master as well as my housemaster, had a habit of interpolating sudden questions on English literature into lessons on Herodotus or Livy. One day he asked the top boy of the class for the Christian name of Chaucer. The poor boy did not know and the question was passed from one boy to another down the class. I was near the bottom, about thirtieth I think, and I watched the question coming to me with eager excitement. When at last it did reach me I replied with the utmost confidence, "Daniel." Butler looked a little puzzled and asked me what put that into my head. I replied gleefully by quoting Tennyson's "Dream of Fair Women."

"Dan Chaucer, the first warbler . . ." etc.

Dan, of course, was not an abbreviation of Daniel as I supposed, but Butler was so pleased with my answer that he allowed me to leap to the top of the class in one bound, an act of injustice, no doubt, but it did not really matter, for when we got back to Herodotus or whatever it was we were doing, I rapidly sank back to my normal place.

Butler offered a prize for the study of Shakespeare, and set *King John* as our special subject. I had some hope of winning that prize, but I was beaten by a boy with far more brains and far better literary faculty than I had.

This was Herbert Trench, afterwards a poet of no small merit and at one time manager of the Haymarket Theatre. It was while he was there, long years after he won the Shakespeare prize, that he asked me to write a play for him.

My fondness for poetry made me rather a favourite with Butler. He persuaded me to learn off by heart Milton's "Ode to the Nativity," assuring me that a knowledge of that poem would be a possession of great value to me in after-life. I think he was right about that, and I was willing enough to do as he asked me to, for I never had much difficulty in learning any kind of verse off by heart.

Among Butler's antiquarian tastes was a fondness for old cookery books, and he used to invite a chosen few of us to his rooms to make pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, according to a recipe given in a cookery book of the age of Queen Anne. I daresay the pancakes were queer enough when they were turned out, but we ate them heartily. In those days the elder boys all made pancakes in their studies on Shrove Tuesday, and I became an expert at tossing them. A few years ago the late headmaster invited me to visit the school again; I think to preach in the chapel. He had the head boy to meet me at breakfast on Sunday morning, and I walked round the school with this boy afterwards, telling him the things we used to do. When I came to the pancake-making in Butler's rooms and in our studies, he stopped me and most respectfully asked whether I had any objection to his making a note of what I said for the benefit of the Antiquarian Society. It was my first introduction to the fact that I really was beginning to grow old and I shivered at the thought that I was taking my place in the archæology of cookery along, perhaps, with King Alfred.

It was Butler who prepared me for confirmation. He was, I think, a disciple of the early Tractarian school and a great deal of his teaching was very strange to me, utterly different from the north of Ireland Protestantism in which I had been brought up.

Much of it I scarcely understood at all, and some of it roused in me a vague feeling of hostility. I think that Butler saw this, for in the end, after giving me a kind of benediction, he laid his hand on my arm and said: "Always do unto others as you would they should do unto you. After all that is really the only thing which matters." That, at least, I understood. I had heard it as I sat on my father's knee and watched him turning over the pages of his big Bible until he came to the picture of the Good Samaritan. He used to show me these Bible pictures when I was very small, every morning before breakfast. We might linger awhile over Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah, or Elijah and the ravens, or St. Paul at Athens, or even Tobit and his dog, but it was always to the Good Samaritan that we came in the end, and it was the "do unto others" rule which finished our morning lesson. Since those days and since Butler's confirmation teaching I have wandered far through many phases of belief and unbelief, but I have never doubted that the golden rule was a lantern to the feet of man, the only rule by which we can securely walk. After all, Butler with his "one thing that matters" went no further than his Master and mine did. He said, "For this is the law and the prophets."

CHAPTER III

THERE was some talk of my going to Cambridge when I left Haileybury, and I think Clare College had actually been fixed as the college. But in the end this plan was changed and I was sent to Trinity College, Dublin. My father had been there before me, and going up my mother's side of the family, three of my direct ancestors, Wynnes, had graduated there. I would make the fourth of a direct line if I took my degree in Dublin, and I think this weighed with my father. There was also the question of money. My father was not very well off at that time and Cambridge would have cost a good deal more than Trinity College, Dublin. As soon as it was settled that Dublin was to be my University, it was discovered that I knew next to no mathematics. In those days mathematics was very sketchily taught, as an inferior and unimportant subject, on the classical side of an English public school. I do not suppose that Haileybury was any worse than anywhere else, but my recollection is that we spent about four hours a week at mathematics and, as the subject did not count in settling our position in form, nobody cared whether we did any work or not.

Whether in those days a man could get on at an English University without mathematics I do not know, but in Dublin it was necessary to know something about the subject. I knew next to nothing, so it was determined to take me away from Haileybury rather before the usual age and send me for a time to a Belfast day school where

mathematics was really taught. As a matter of fact I went to two day schools before entering Dublin University, but I must have been a very short time at each of them. The first was the Belfast Academy, which had just been rebuilt. There I won the first and only school-prize I ever received. It was for a poem on Spurius Lartius. I chose the metre of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* for my effort, a very wise choice, for it not only suited a classical narrative poem, but is the easiest metre in the English language to write. But in spite of my success as a poet, my mathematics remained deplorably weak. I was taken from the Academy and sent to the Methodist College. There I had my first and only taste of co-education. I heartily disliked it, for I was beaten day after day by a girl, Miss Eva Henry, the daughter of one of the professors in Queen's College, Belfast. She was much cleverer and more diligent than I was, but I think she must have been a little lacking in tact, for she always let me know that she regarded me with contempt. There I came under the teaching of Mr. McNeill, who afterwards became Master of Campbell College when it was founded. He must have been a very good teacher, for he succeeded in interesting me in algebra and trigonometry. Unfortunately, when I was withdrawn from his influence, my taste for these things died away and I reverted to a feeling of dislike for mathematics which began when Waterfield birched me for not doing long division sums. My experience with Mr. McNeill supports a belief which I hold firmly, that any boy can be interested in any subject if only the right teacher is found for him.

It was during that year at Belfast that I first made friends with the sons of the Rev. H. H. Wright. One of the elder

sons, then in Trinity College, is now Sir Almroth Wright, and, after a long lapse of time, I have been able to renew our friendship. I now meet him often in the Manor House at Mells, where so many wise and witty men and women—and many who are not very wise or witty—gather during the summer. It is a society to which a man may count himself fortunate to be admitted. Of the blessings of my later life I count this the chief, that I have been welcomed by Lady Horner into the circle of her friends and allowed a little share in the delights of social life in her home.

Of the Wrights the youngest, Ernest, was my special friend. We entered college together and were ordained almost at the same time. For many years we kept up a correspondence, but his work was in England, whereas I remained in Ireland for most of my life. By degrees our correspondence languished for lack of common interests, but the friendship remained unbroken till the end came for him. During that year in Belfast, and after I had entered the college, I did a great deal of miscellaneous reading, too much perhaps. My university career, never likely to be brilliant, was certainly made worse than it need have been by my lack of concentration on any single subject. Even with my limited pocket-money I was able to afford to buy almost as many cheap books as I could read and I browsed with impartial pleasure on all sorts of books, from the sermons of Caroline divines down to anthologies of Irish political verse. At one time I had quite a large library of these cheap editions, but alas, like so many books I have acquired through life, they have disappeared now.

I entered Trinity College in 1883 and it was supposed

that I had some chance of winning a Junior Exhibition. In this I failed. The course for the Exhibition was a very extensive one and embraced almost every subject about which a young man might be expected to know something. Usually a man did fairly well in his own subjects and came to grief in the others. I came to grief so badly in my weak subjects that I was unable to make up the loss with my classics and my English literature. My father took me up to Dublin for my matriculation and we stayed at the Shelburn Hotel, then the home from home of the Irish country gentry. It was there, one night at dinner, that I was introduced to Professor Blackie, who happened to be in Dublin at the time. My father told him that I was there for my matriculation examination and Professor Blackie startled me by saying: "Ah, beginning to acquire the rugged elements." I naturally enough held the view that my education was nearly complete when I entered the university. His remark took a good deal of conceit out of me and what was left disappeared when I paid my first visit to the college library. It may not be the finest library in the world, but I still think it is the most impressive, for the books are housed in one long and lofty gallery, scarcely to be entered without a sense of awe. The feeling of immensity of human learning inspired by this vast collection of books is wholesomely humbling to a young man with any imagination. But that first visit to the library, also ministered, equally wholesomely, to my pride. The roll of the last Irish Parliament is exhibited, framed and hung on a wall. I was able to distinguish the signature of my great-grandfather and to reflect on the fact that he had not been bribed to betray his country.

It was at that time that my father, taking some thought

for my spiritual and moral life, introduced me to Canon Wynne, afterwards Bishop of Killaloe, the Incumbent of St. Matthias Church in Dublin. From the day that my father took me to the Wynnes' house in Leeson Park I received nothing but kindness and help from Canon Wynne. I owe to him most of the little that is good in me and much of the religion which has helped me through life, and I think of him as the most saintly man I ever met. Outside of his parish he was engaged in special work for the students of the Divinity School of Trinity College, Dublin, work which at one time was unrecognised and unpaid. He held classes for students every week during the college terms in his own house. We were given tea and afterwards a lecture on the spiritual side of our future work, often by Canon Wynne himself, sometimes by others whom he invited to address us. These classes had a wonderful effect on those who attended them, and in after-life I have continually met men eminent in the church, or rectors of obscure country parishes, who have told me that they owe much of their spiritual life to the influence of those classes of Canon Wynne's. Afterwards his work was recognised by the University and he was the first occupant of a newly founded chair of Pastoral Theology.

It was then that I met his eldest daughter, Adelaide Wynne, who was always called Ada. I fell deeply in love with her at once. I think that with me it was actually a case of that rare thing, love at first sight: but it was some time before she came to regard me as anything but a pleasant boy, one of the large number who came to her father's house. It was my good fortune and the chief blessing of my life that she afterwards agreed to marry me.

Our life together was one of unbroken and unclouded love from the day she first promised to marry me until God took her from me.

It was in Trinity College, also, that I came into connection with a man who influenced me profoundly. This was Dr. Salmon, then Regius Professor of Divinity and afterwards Provost. It has been my good fortune to meet many able men during my life, many who have won high places through their intellectual power, or who, perhaps because of the same gift, have won nothing. Of all of them I place Dr. Salmon first for sheer power of mind. He was originally a mathematician of European celebrity and only turned to theology in later life. His early training affected his later work, and showed in his contempt for haziness of thought. Nothing was more hateful to his mind than the vagueness which seems to be characteristic of much teaching about religion. He detested catchwords and all the many phrases with which men try to disguise their inability or unwillingness to think. He delighted in analysing "blessed words" of the mesopotamia kind. I acquired from him a habit, really a most inconvenient habit, of trying to find out the actual meaning of slogans round which our tribes rally. One of the oddest experiences of my life has been the discovery that few if any of the great words about which we get excited have any meaning at all.

It was while I was at Trinity College that I made the acquaintance of John Henry Bernard, then a young man. My friendship with him lasted until his death and I count him as one of the best friends among the many whom I met at college. I must, I think, have been singularly fortunate in the men I knew in those days. Another of

my friends was Alfred Lilley, now Archdeacon of Hereford, who was an undergraduate when I was, I think in the same year. We were drawn together by our love of poetry. I lived, I remember, at the time, with another Belfast boy who, like myself, was in the divinity school, but was much more interested in sport than letters. He and I were good friends, but he did not share my intimacy with Lilley. Once I went off to spend an evening, one of many, in Lilley's lodgings. We met to read poetry to each other. On that particular evening we were reading Swinburne. I think it was the Subtle Delicious Dolores, who delighted us, for we were both young. I do not know whether the tobacco Lilley gave me was too strong for my immature stomach, or whether the "roses and rapture" produced some kind of vertigo. Before the evening was over I became violently sick. After the first spasms were over I lay down on Lilley's bed to recover a little before I staggered home. My friend, when I got home, asked what had kept me so late, and I told him that I had been lying for the last hour on Lilley's bed. To this he replied: "Lily? Lily? That's the barmaid at Dan Lowry's, isn't it?" Dan Lowry's was a well-known Dublin music hall at that time and the bed of the barmaid was the very last place where a divinity student ought to have spent his evening.

I took my degree in 1887. It was not a distinguished degree, nothing more than a Junior Moderatorship, which corresponds roughly to a second class at Oxford. My subject was modern literature. I might have done better if I had not on my way through college experimented in three or four subjects before I decided to specialise in modern literature. Looking back on this now I cannot regard it as a waste of time that I attended honour lectures

in classics, logics, or ethics, and in history and political science, doing a certain amount of reading in each subject, before I settled down to literature. I got a great deal of miscellaneous knowledge by hopping about from one subject to another: but my vagaries certainly interfered with my chance of getting a good degree. If I had had anyone to advise me I might have been more worldly-wise and have stuck steadily to one subject. But my tutor, who should have looked after me in this way, was Dr. Anthony Traill, a friend of my father's, and the head of an old County Antrim family. I think he had less taste for scholarship or literature than any University Don I have ever met. But he was a man of great force of character and had the north of Ireland characteristic of never knowing when he was beaten. I sometimes stayed with him, while I was an undergraduate, in Ballylough which had once been rented by my grandfather from the Traills, and of which Anthony Traill had then taken possession. His appointment as Provost in succession to Dr. Salmon was looked on at the time as a piece of jobbery, of which the Prime Minister had no reason to be proud. But in the end it turned out that his Provostship was a good thing for the college. He showed a most unexpected liberality in dealing with the women who at that time were beginning to force their way into university life. It was he, I think, who hit on the idea of allowing women who passed all their examinations at English Universities, but who could not obtain their degrees there, to take out a B.A. at Dublin University, on something like the *Ad eundum* system, at pretty stiff fees. Traill, with his natural north of Ireland astuteness, made sure of the fees, and with the money he thus gathered he built Trinity Hall a house of residence

for bona fide Dublin University women students. In later life Traill became an enthusiastic golfer. The first time he saw the game played was on the Sandhills at Portrush. It struck him as a remarkably easy game which almost anyone could play and he said so to the man he was watching. "Well," said the player, "I wish you would just try and see if it is as easy as you think." "Certainly," said Traill, with complete self-confidence. A ball was teed up for him, he was provided with a driver and shown the flag which marked the hole. Traill drove off with easy confidence and laid the ball within a couple of feet of the hole at the first attempt. "There," he said, "I told you there was not the slightest difficulty about it." Unfortunately, I do not think he was ever able to repeat this performance, but his desire to do so made him an enthusiastic golfer. I used often to see him, his broad back covered with a scarlet coat, the proper wear for golfers in those days, pounding round the Portrush golf links.

It was while he was Provost that the undergraduate editor of the little college magazine took to publishing birthday greetings to well-known men. Each greeting took the form of a quotation from some poet. When Traill's birthday came round the editor chose Kipling's line: "The old trail, the long trail, the trail that's always new." The Provost was delighted and went about asking—"Who's this man Kipling, and how did he come to write a poem about me?"

Traill had a strong objection to tobacco as I learnt the first time I stayed with him at Ballylough. He took me to a potting-shed at the far end of the garden and a very considerable distance from the house and said: "If you want to smoke you may do it here, but you are not to

smoke any nearer the house than this." As a college tutor he had a great reputation for getting students out of trouble. If you came to grief in some examination or got into any kind of row you had nothing to do but to go to Traill. If you were his pupil he took your side as a matter of course, whatever the rights or wrongs may have been and fought for you with the utmost vigour. This, I think, was more value to me on my way through college than any advice he could have given me in the choice of a subject in which to specialise.

When it came to the time of my final examination for my degree I did fairly well, indeed I think very well in the English part of my subject, but, unfortunately, I had to take literature of some other country as well. I chose French, foolishly, for I think I should have liked reading German literature a great deal better than I did French, and at that time I could not read anything successfully that I didn't really enjoy. The works of Corneille, Racine, Montesquieu and others of the French classics bored me stiff, and when the time came for the examination I knew next to nothing about them. My English was not good enough to get me a first-class degree, although I did succeed in getting a really good mark for my English composition. I can remember to this day the subject set. "Laborare est Orare." I must have written quite a good essay on this theme. I used it again recently when preaching a sermon to a Diocesan Association of Bell-ringers. There was an appropriateness about this choice of subject, for I have noticed that these gentlemen generally walk out of church as soon as they have summoned the congregation to come in. They apparently believe that their labours at bell-ringing for a whole hour beforehand exempt them from

doing anything in the way of praying.

I was not always so fortunate with my English compositions. There was one which I had to write on Dryden's Dramatic Art. I was supposed to read up the subject beforehand and I had not done so and knew nothing about it. However, I wrote a composition of a fair length on my views about the dramatic art in general. Unfortunately, the examiner who dealt with my essay was Dr. Bernard, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin. He discovered at once that whatever the merits of my composition might be I knew nothing at all about my subject, and he marked my composition nought. It was a custom in Trinity College, Dublin, in those days to indicate the merits of any piece of work by figures descending from ten to nought. Years afterwards, when Bernard was staying in my house I reminded him of this and told him that since then I had been earning my daily bread mainly by the very thing of which he thought I was totally incapable, that is to say by English composition of one kind or another. He replied that no doubt it was the sternness of his original marking which made me take trouble afterwards to learn how to do the thing. "If I had given you a pass mark," he said, "you would have thought you were good enough and would never have learnt to do any better, so it is me you have to thank for such successes as have come to you."

I had another misadventure with this same subject of English composition. When I was in the divinity school we were called upon once a month to write a sermon. These were afterwards criticised by the professors before the whole class. On one occasion an embittered lecturer said: "About Hannay's sermon I have nothing to say, except that he has spelt the word Apocrypha five times

differently and all wrong." That, I still maintain, was not a fault in the sermon itself. Besides, I think it displayed an ingenuity which deserved commendation.

Later on I won the Downe's prize for extempore speaking. This, I think, is one of the most immoral prizes ever offered in a University. The student was supposed to preach an extempore sermon. The judges in my day were the Regius Professor of Divinity, Archbishop King's Lecturer in Divinity, and Edward Dowden, the Professor of English Literature. The candidates were summoned into the room one by one, handed a Bible with a text marked, allowed five minutes for meditation, and then called upon to deliver a sermon. This was simply an encouragement to them to acquire the art of talking in public without preparation. Far too many young men are good at that without having prizes offered to them. After you had delivered your own sermon you had to sit down at the end of the room and listen to the efforts of other students. Sometimes the sermons delivered were extremely funny. There was one man who began boldly: "I divide my congregation into two classes, the converted and the unconverted." When he reached the word unconverted, which he pronounced with great emphasis, Dr. Salmon nudged the Professor of English Literature who was sitting next to him and he said: "That must be you, Dowden."

Shortly before I took my degree I entered the divinity school for two years' special instruction in theological subjects. When I entered the school Dr. Salmon was Regius Professor and Dr. Gwynn was Archbishop King's Lecturer. It was my privilege to listen to the last series of lectures on the Infallibility of the Church, and I think those lectures produced a permanent effect upon my mind. I could

never escape from the logic with which Dr. Salmon dealt with the pretensions of those who maintained the infallibility either of the Pope, General Council or indeed anyone else. The lectures were afterwards published and I re-read them again in later life with the same rather terrified delight with which I listened to them. I have never seen any answer to the arguments which Salmon produced although the wrangle about infallibility has gone growling on, and I suppose always will.

Dr. Gwynn was a most amiable and delightful man, and along his own lines a great scholar. But his lectures were much less interesting and vigorous than Dr. Salmon's. I always got the impression that Dr. Gwynn was a little tired of his subject and that he might have been more interesting if he had taken up something new. Later on, as I grew older, Dr. Gwynn was very kind to me and guided my taste in literature a great deal more than he influenced my religious feelings or my theological opinions. I look back with pleasure to the walks and talks I had with him. He was surely the gentlest and kindest of all college Dons. His kindness to me continued after I was ordained and I can remember his coming down and spending a night at my lodgings at Delgany. The Professor of Ecclesiastical History was another man who was very kind to me. He was Dr. G. T. Stokes and he was also rector of a small parish near Blackrock. I often went to his church on Sundays. He was the author of two books, very well known at the time. *Ireland and the Gaelic Church* and *Ireland and the Anglo-Norman Church*. I do not know whether they are still read or not, but the book on the Gaelic Church had a great reputation in those days. It was he who persuaded me to go in for a prize in Ecclesiastical History, and, very

much to my surprise I won the second prize, being beaten by R. H. S. Cooper, afterwards my father's curate. There were as well as I can remember only three competitors for these prizes and so my place as second was no great credit to me. Stokes conducted these examinations in the most unconventional manner. Unlike most Trinity College examinations of that day, they were entirely written, and he gave me the impression of inventing the questions on the morning of the examination. The weather was snowy and cold and we were examined in a small room not very well heated, although there was an enormous fire. Stokes sat down in front of the fire, absorbing most of the heat, took off his boots, which I daresay were wet, and put his feet on the fender. Then, with his back turned to us he asked us to write all we knew about John Wesley. As the English Church History during the eighteenth century was part of the special course set out for our study we all knew a great deal about Wesley, and Stokes evidently thought that he had given us occupation enough for the morning. He took no further notice of us till he collected our papers at luncheon time. During the afternoon we passed on to another part of the subject and again we were given a solitary question which was likely to occupy us during the entire time at our disposal. We were asked to discuss the authenticity and general value of the Ignatian Epistles. We had worked through Lightfoot's edition of these epistles and had picked up enough information to keep us writing the whole afternoon. This pleased Stokes immensely. I remember that he dozed a little while we toiled. I have always been uncertain whether he ever read the mass of manuscript which we presented to him. He knew his candidates intimately and was quite well able to decide

without any examination which of us knew the most Ecclesiastical History. I am quite sure that he was right in putting me below Cooper. I am not so sure that I deserved to be placed above the third candidate, but at all events that was Stokes's idea of our merits, and I had no reason to be dissatisfied with it.

I do not think that I was ever a really satisfactory divinity student. I was interested in a great deal of my work and I think I was sincerely anxious to be worthy of the office in the Church to which I aspired. But there was a great deal of work I was supposed to do which not only did not interest me, but created in me a feeling of antagonism. There was for instance a book by Bishop Brown on the Thirty-nine Articles. As well as I can recollect the worthy Bishop set to work to prove from Holy Scripture that the statements made in the Articles are true. It struck me then and it has gone on striking me ever since that the task was quite hopeless. Things cannot be proved by quoting texts, and it does not matter to most of us whether the Thirty-nine Articles can be proved or not from Scripture or in any other way. I may be wronging the learned Bishop, for I have not looked at his book since I satisfied my examiner that I had read it; but his arguments always irritated me. I used to relieve my soul after mastering a chapter or two by writing satirical verses (of a very poor quality) about his reasoning. I was at that time interested in such exotic forms of versification as Ballades, Pantoums, Triolets and so forth. I tried these metres on Bishop Brown and the Thirty-nine Articles. I came across one of my triolets the other day which has somehow survived on a blank page at the beginning of a Prayer Book, an odd place to put a triolet which was almost profane.

It was not a good piece of versifying, but it reminded me vividly of the bitterness of feeling always aroused in me when I had to learn what I did not like. I was also, I fear, rather aloof from my fellow divinity students, disinclined to share their amusements and a little bored by their talk. This has been an unamiable failing of mine all my life. I have never been able to endure the society of large numbers of clergymen at the same time, although I have had far more good friends among them than I deserve. It was just the same when I was a divinity student. I look back on one or two of my friendships formed then with memories of great pleasure. But from the general life of the divinity school I kept rather apart. Most of my friends were men who were going in for other professions, some who were called to the Bar, some of them were studying medicine, and some who intended to go into the army. I remember well on the eve of my ordination meeting three of these friends one after the other when I was on my way to the Archbishop's Palace in St. Stephen's Green. The first greeted me thus: "Well, Hannay, I hear you are going to be called almost at once." The second said: "I hear that you are now qualified and will be practising now soon." The third asked me bluntly: "When will you be joining up?" Each of them was speaking the jargon of his own profession. Not one of them had picked up that of mine.

I did, as I said, see something of my fellow divinity students, but my spare evenings were generally spent with these others and our chief amusement was playing cards, for such moderate stakes as we could afford. We arranged to have a final meeting just before I was ordained and I felt that I must from that day forth give up playing cards,

at least for money. We played a game, now almost forgotten, called Loo; a game of almost pure chance, requiring little or no skill. Nothing I could do all that evening would prevent my winning. After I had gone on steadily for an hour or two I deliberately tried to lose, betting up to the limit on the most impossible hands. It made no difference. However bad my hands were, those of everyone else turned out to be worse. It was a curious thing that nothing in card-playing is so dull as continually winning. I have heard this said by gamblers and in my own experience it is true. That evening I was bored and very sleepy by the time we got to midnight, and the thing I desired most was to stop playing and go to bed. Of course, it was impossible for me as a heavy winner to suggest going to bed. I had to go on winning until everybody else was wearied out or had no money left. The stakes we played for were very small and my total winnings, though they seemed large at the time, cannot really have amounted to much. I remember that I went out next morning and spent the money on a complete edition of Thomas Carlyle, very nicely bound in calf. I wonder whether gambling winnings were ever spent in that way before, and whether that fierce old philosopher would have approved of that way of obtaining his works.

I have mentioned the effect produced on my mind by the lectures and classes of Dr. Wynne, who was afterwards my father-in-law. He set us so high an idea of the priesthood that I always left the classes with a deep sense of my unworthiness and often with the feeling that I must give up all idea of taking Holy Orders. He used to say that unless we were certain of a real call to the work of the Ministry it would be better for us to give our lives to stone-

breaking on the side of the road. I often felt that stone-breaking ought to be my future lot, but there was just one occasion when I came away from his class without a conviction that I was utterly unworthy. He had impressed upon us the duty of associating as much as possible with the less religious people in our parishes and not devoting our time entirely to the more congenial society of regular churchgoers, church workers, and obviously good people. In other words, he wanted us to eat and drink with publicans and sinners rather than with Pharisees, and he thought that this would be a very difficult thing for us to do. It seemed to me to be the only easy thing that he had ever advised. I have always preferred publicans and sinners to the righteous man, though I knew well that I have not been a good enough man to make saints out of them, which was what Canon Wynne expected us to do.

My ordination examinations came very easy to me. They were held day after day for a week in the palace in St. Stephen's Green. The head of the examining board was Archdeacon Scott of Dublin. His son was with me at Haileybury and was head of the school when I was quite low down, though we were about the same age. The one subject about which the Archdeacon found fault with me was my Latin prose. I remember perfectly his reproach. "I did think," he said sadly, "that a Haileybury boy would have done better than you have." In that matter the Archdeacon misjudged me. I could write Latin prose moderately and could have satisfied him if he had not gone in for a peculiar double-edged way of examining. Instead of giving us a piece of English prose to work on he asked us to translate the collects for Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide. Unlike an objectionable character in the,

Merchant of Venice, we did not "wear Prayer Books in our pockets." The Archdeacon assumed, I daresay quite rightly, that an ordination candidate ought to know these collects off by heart. I, unfortunately, did not, and making bricks without straw is an easier task than turning a piece of English into Latin when you don't know the English. As well as I can remember I did not get any further than *O, Deus Omnipotens* for a beginning and *Per Jesum Christum Dominum Nostrum Amen* for an end. This the Archdeacon rightly regarded as insufficient and assumed that I was incapable of turning the rest of the collects into any kind of Latin. I was not. I could have done it quite well if I had only known the English words. But when he came to speak to me about it I was ashamed to confess this. It is better after all to know no Latin than not to be able to repeat the collect for Christmas Day. However, I suppose that the rest of my work was good enough to get me through the examination for the Deacons Orders without Latin prose. It is possible, of course, to maintain that Latin prose is a useless accomplishment for a clergyman, but the Archdeacon did not think so. Nor do I think so now. Every now and then clergymen are called upon for one reason or another to compose a prayer or, as I once was, to write an exhortation for a special occasion based on the Dearly Beloved Brethren of the Prayer Book. Bishops, of course, are always doing this kind of thing and launching on the Church prayers for special occasions, such as general elections, things which a really reverent man would never mention to the Almighty. These efforts are so entirely inferior to anything in the Prayer Book that I have been driven to the conclusion that no good collect can be written originally in any language except Latin. If only

our Bishops would grasp that fact they might, by composing in Latin and then translating, produce much better prayers than they do. They cannot all of them have forgotten how to write Latin prose.

I remember during the war sitting in the smoking-room of a club in London to which I did not belong, but in which I was temporarily lodged while my own club was being repainted or cleaned. The only other occupants of the smoking-room were two old gentlemen who took absolutely no notice of my presence. They talked to each other, and, as they were both a little deaf, I could not help hearing what they said. They were very despondent about the prospects of the war, and one of them said frankly that he thought we were going to be beaten. The other replied: "No, no. We are in the right, and if we are in the right we must win, for then God is on our side. At least He would be, if only the bishops would not keep irritating Him the way they do." I am sure that this man had listened Sunday after Sunday to the special prayers ordered to be used in his parish church, and being a man of simple mind he felt that the Almighty, presumably a person of good taste, must be seriously annoyed.

I was ordained deacon in the Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, by Lord Plunket, who was then Archbishop. He had been a friend of my father's in the old days when the revision of the Irish Prayer Book was going on. My first meeting with the Archbishop, then Bishop of Meath, took place when I was a small boy, and was taken with my father to spend a few weeks at Old Connaught, Lord Plunket's house near Bray. There was a great gathering of clergy there all intent on the revision of the Prayer Book. I do not know why I was invited and why I was

taken, but I still remember the enormous gatherings at breakfast-time and have a vision of a long row of clergymen cracking boiled eggs. When breakfast was over, my days were spent with William Lee Plunket, afterwards Lord Plunket, and his governess in the schoolroom. After that I met the Archbishop, from time to time, until at last he ordained me both Deacon and Priest. I look back on him as a most gracious gentleman of high courage and strong principles. He was not in the least afraid of popular clamour and even when, in my opinion, he was wrong, I always admired the way in which he maintained his cause. Like many mentally courageous men, he was inclined to be radical. My father used to tell a story of him which I always liked. During the period of revision of the Prayer Book, after the disestablishment of the Church, the Bishop of Derry, Dr. Alexander, was seen coming out of the committee room with an expression of disgust on his face. Someone asked him what was going on inside. He replied: "Oh, nothing. Nothing. Only the usual thing. Plunket is proposing an amendment to the Lord's Prayer."

CHAPTER IV

THE first offer I had of a curacy came from Canon Fleming, then vicar or rector of an important London church. It came to me through the good offices of Lady MacNaghten, who was a great friend of my father's. Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately—she was muddled about my age, and the offer came to me when I was only twenty, three years too young to be ordained. I have sometimes speculated on what life would have been if that offer had come three years later and I had accepted it. I might, with such a start, have become a Rural Dean or even a member of the Church Assembly. Now, I fear, I never shall.

My next offer also came too soon, but not much too soon. It came from the Rev. J. J. Robinson, one of the Canons of Christ Church, Dublin, and afterwards Dean of Belfast. He had just become Rector of Delgany, a most charming country parish in County Wicklow. A country curacy in County Wicklow was the very last thing I had planned for myself. I always intended to work in one of our northern towns, perhaps in Belfast, where I should have large numbers to deal with, and should be with people whom I knew and liked: the hard northern working man. The Delgany curacy, so far as I knew anything about it, was utterly different. My work there would be in the country, among the southern Irish, and very largely among upper classes; certainly not among ship carpenters and flax spinners. The offer came to me when I was staying with my cousin, Mrs. Walter Wilson, whose husband was a

partner in Harland and Wolff, the shipbuilding firm. My parents were abroad at the time and I had no one to advise me, for Walter Wilson was uninterested in Church affairs, and certainly in no position to act as my guide. I accepted the offer after very short consideration, although it promised a future unlike anything I had ever planned. It has always been like this in my life. I have planned, but never carried out my plans. I have gone here and there, but never to the places I intended to go. I believe most heartily that I have been guided by wisdom far greater than my own and forced to go hither and thither by a power which I could not resist. I have learnt, as I have grown older, to trust God's guidance and to follow the path He shows me without regrets or looking back. But while I believe most firmly in this divine ordering of my life, I recognise that God has not simply pushed me here and there by main force, but has always so worked upon my mind as to lead me to believe, at the time, that I was choosing for myself. There was always an impelling motive. In the case of my acceptance of the nomination for the Delgany curacy the motive was a desire to keep in touch with Ada Wynne, with whom, by this time, I was deeply in love. If I settled in Belfast it seemed likely that I should see little or nothing of her in the future. If I went to Delgany I should see her often. Her father, Canon Wynne, had a house which he built for himself in Greystones, a little watering-place quite close to Delgany. He came there every summer, and members of his family were constantly going to and fro between that house and their home in Leeson Park, Dublin. Besides this, Canon Robinson, who was to be my rector, had been Canon Wynne's curate and there was a close connection between the two families,



ADA HANNAY

especially a deep friendship between Ada Wynne and Mrs. Robinson. I foresaw that Ada would often be a guest in Delgany Rectory and that I should see her there.

It was this that decided me to give up all the plans I had ever made for the future and to accept the kind of work which I had not intended to do, indeed had quite determined not to do.

That decision really fixed the course of my life afterwards. I became when I went to Delgany a country parson and have remained one almost ever since. The country clergy are, I suppose, the most despised of God's creatures. No one has much good to say for them. They are the favourite butt for the wit of the second-rate novelists and are not overmuch esteemed even by their own brethren in Holy Orders. A man who settles in the country is supposed to bury himself. He becomes inefficient, lazy, and mentally atrophied. This is at least the general view, and I think it is the view that even my father or Canon Wynne would have taken if I had been able to consult either of them about this first decision. I know that afterwards Canon Wynne regarded my staying in the country as a great mistake, and after I had been four years in Delgany he urged me strongly to go to some large town parish. It was the fact that I had fallen in love with Ada Wynne which decided the matter for me, and in that love I have learnt to see the hand of God leading me.

The matter, of course, was not settled by a couple of letters. Robinson wanted to see me and I, however firmly my mind was made up, was in duty bound to see him and the parish in which I was to work. I very well remember that first interview with Robinson. I think he was nearly as nervous as I was. I was his first curate and he often

said that a first curate, like a first wife, is more to a man than any who may come afterwards. I made my way out to his charming rectory and was shown into his study. I was then, as I have been ever since, a lover of tobacco, and I had in my pocket my pipe and tobacco-pouch, though in those days, odd as this may seem now, smoking was rather frowned upon by the clergy. It was supposed that a man could not be a good parson if he smoked a pipe. My father, as he often told me, had to give up smoking when he was ordained, so strong was the prejudice in those days. Even in my own time I have heard the position aphoristically stated by a pious layman. "Smoking leads to billiards and billiards lead to beer." Beyond beer, I suppose, there are no further depths. On the other hand I have heard a good scriptural defence put up by a flippant curate who said that we were told in the Psalms to rejoice before the Lord with a pipe.

I confess I looked rather anxiously round Robinson's study when I entered it to see if there were any signs of the use of tobacco. I should have liked to catch sight of a tobacco-jar, a tobacco-pouch, or even an ash tray. There was nothing of the sort in sight, not a single thing to suggest that Robinson had ever smoked in his life. I found out afterwards, to my great relief, that he was as fond of smoking as I was. But in his fear of shocking me, he had concealed every sign of the vice during our first interview, while I kept my pouch in my pocket until I got safely out of the house. After we conquered this first shyness we smoked many pipes happily together.

Something very similar happened to me once when I was holding a mission in a small parish in County Limerick. I was staying in the house of the rector and he apparently

did not smoke. I got through the day pretty well, but I felt, especially after the nervous strain of mission preaching, that I really wanted a pipe before I went to bed. I invented an excuse, and said I liked to take a walk before going to bed, a solitary walk, and would sleep better if I had it. Night after night during the week of that mission I used to go out about ten o'clock, walk far enough from the house to feel safe and then smoke my pipe. The last night of my stay was exceptionally wet and stormy, and my host begged me not to go out for my evening walk. I held firmly to my supposed habit and refused to be persuaded. I put on a waterproof and took an umbrella and went out, but I did not go far. The night was really too bad for a long walk. I took shelter under a tree opposite the door of the house and, in great discomfort, I lit my pipe. I heard a voice hailing me from the doorstep: "Hannay, Hannay, do you mean to say that you have gone out in order to smoke?" I had to admit the truth. "And is that the reason you went out for a walk every night?" Again I had to utter a reluctant yes. "Good heavens," said the old gentleman, "and I have gone down to the kitchen and smoked up the chimney every night for fear of shocking you!" That night at least we smoked in comfort over a good fire in his study, and sat up late to make up for all the other nights.

The moral of these two tales, if a moral is needed, is that one ought to be frank about one's vices. Fellowship in austere virtue is an excellent thing, no doubt, but friendships are more often founded on common self-indulgences, and it is hard to like a man who has no redeeming vices.

Delgany is a very charming village, much more like an

English village than an Irish one. There were a great many resident gentry, and the heads of society were Mr. and Mrs. Peter La Touche of Bellevue. They were both very old, too old to do much for the village, but they were most hospitable and very proud of their beautiful house, with its lovely pictures, Adams chimney pieces and Angelica Kauffmann decorations. I came to know the house well afterwards, when it was rented by Ada's uncle, Albert Wynne. Like so many of the great Irish houses it has now fallen from its high estate. Besides the La Touches there were a good many other gentry in the parish, chiefly elderly ladies and men who had retired from active life. These formed a very pleasant, though unexciting society and there was a steady round of little parties. In the parish, but a little aloof from this society, were two people with whom I was fortunate enough to make friends. One was Lady Butler, the artist. The other was Mr. T. W. Rolleston, a good Greek scholar who published a translation of Epictetus, which I read constantly at one time, and knew many passages off by heart. He was greatly interested in the beginning of the literary renaissance in Ireland, and was himself the author of a fine poem, included in the Oxford book of English verse. It was he who first introduced me to Yeats's poetry, by giving me a present of *The Wanderings of Oisín*, which, I think, was the first volume of verse Yeats published. He also led me to read Standish O'Grady, to whom Anglo-Irish literature owes a great deal. Rolleston and his brother-in-law, Mr. De Burgh, then the assistant librarian in Trinity College, Dublin, used to meet in the evenings to read Sophocles together. I remember wishing that they would invite me to join these parties, but they never did. My Greek was

not up to the level of theirs, so I suppose they were right.

I was most fortunate in my rector, and my relations with him rapidly ripened into a sincere affection, which I am thankful to say remained unbroken up to the end of his life, in spite of a difference of opinion so serious as to lead to my leaving Delgany.

We had a great many tastes in common in addition to our interest in our work and the desire I think we both felt to do the best we could for the parish. Robinson was an extremely well-read man, especially in modern literature, and had a great love for poetry. He possessed a fine verbal memory and could recite long passages of poetry without effort or hesitation. I had also a good memory of this kind and on Sunday evenings after our day's work was done we often sat late in his study, capping quotations which sometimes extended themselves into recitations. Mrs. Robinson was always frankly bored and no wonder. She used to sit with abstracted attention until the time came when she could go to bed. At that time my memory was so good that I could recite any poem from Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, if I were given the first line. But Robinson's memory was even better and he was much more widely read than I was.

Robinson was also a good boxer and I can remember many sparring matches with him in the big dining-room of Delgany Rectory. He was nearly twenty years older than I was; but he must have originally been the better boxer of the two, for I never had much advantage over him, except when it came to the end of a bout. I could always last longer than he could. We once decided that we would write a novel in collaboration. Nothing ever came of this plan, but it may have been the first thing that

put the writing of novels into my head. I remember that the hero of our book was to be a high church curate of ascetic spirit and socialistic views. He was to suffer a good deal of persecution and I rather think that in the end, in spite of his principles, we decided to marry him to someone. It might have been quite a good novel, but we never got as far as writing the first chapter, though we often talked about it.

Altogether I was very happy under Canon Robinson, and I do not think that I should have found a rector in the Church of Ireland with whom I should have got on so well. I almost at once conceived a great admiration and respect for Mrs. Robinson. She had been a Miss Lubbock, a sister of Sir John Lubbock, afterwards Lord Avebury. In almost every respect she was unlike her husband. She had a very clear, logical mind, with a tendency to think of things mathematically, as if life were a series of algebraic problems. She had, so far as I can recollect, no fondness whatever for literature. She had a very strong will and an intense dislike of not getting her own way. This sounds a disagreeable characteristic, but she was one of those persons who ought to get their own way, because she was generally right in her decisions. I came afterwards to have a dog-like hero-worship for her. I still think of her as one of the most admirable women I have ever met.

She had before her marriage been trained as a hospital nurse, in those days quite a fashionable profession. Like many ladies, trained and untrained, she had a taste for amateur doctoring, and never shrank from a heroic remedy. I remember going to the Rectory once to conduct a class for Sunday School teachers. I was suffering from raging toothache and told Mrs. Robinson that I feared

the teachers would profit very little by my instruction that day. She undertook at once to set the matter right. This she did, not by extracting the tooth, though I do not think she would have shrunk from that if it had occurred to her as desirable, but by giving me a bottle of chloroform and ordering me to sniff at it till the pain stopped. The remedy was most effective. I ceased to suffer, but I do not know what the assembled Sunday School teachers thought of me. I went sound asleep before I had spoken ten sentences and was only awakened with the greatest difficulty. It seems strange, looking back on it now, that she and Canon Robinson, who were so entirely different from each other in tastes, habit and character, should have been so devoted to each other. But I am quite sure that they were, and remained lovers till the end, a rare but very beautiful thing in a prolonged married life. Mrs. Robinson was always very kind to me, though dominating and rather masterful. The only time when there was any real misunderstanding between us was at the end of my time in Delgany when she thought—quite mistakenly—that I had been disloyal to her husband.

She had a curious theory that it was impossible to do two things properly at the same time, and that she might either be a good clergyman's wife, in which case she must leave the care of her children and her house entirely to other people, or to be a good mother and wife, in which case she must leave all parochial affairs to other hands. I do not think she ever quite made up her mind which of the two lives she preferred. From time to time she changed from one to the other, either dropping her household affairs abruptly and devoting herself to the parish with embarrassing vigour, or leaving the parish ostentati-

ously alone and giving herself entirely to her home and her children. It was during one of her spasms of parish enthusiasm that she took up the training of the choir. She was musical in the sense that she had a very good ear and was a competent pianist. But I do not think she ever experienced the emotion which music is supposed to arouse in those who really love it. She had an interesting theory that all music was of two kinds: either tunes, the sort of things you can whistle, or imitative of natural sounds, like the production of the cuckoo's notes on a piano. I have often wondered what she thought of Bach's preludes—probably that they were not music at all, in which there are many who would agree with her, though few who would say so out loud. She was immediately successful with the choir. She collected a number of young men, some of them young farmers who had never sung at all and could not read a note of music. In a surprisingly short time she taught them to sing their parts correctly.

She was the first of a long series of musical people who attempted to teach me to sing. I have always told them that the thing is impossible, and in the end they come to believe me, though only after causing me a lot of unnecessary suffering. Mrs. Robinson was the most persevering of them all. Day after day I used to go to the rectory and stand beside her piano while she tried to make me sing some note correctly. I never could hit the note she struck with my voice. The great difficulty was that I never knew whether I was going too high or too low. When by chance I got the thing right I was quite unaware of my success, and did not know that the joyful thing had happened until I was told. Mrs. Robinson stuck to that job for nearly two years, working with me three or

four times a week. At the end of it I was no better than I had been at the beginning. My father suffered in the same way, but was less patient than I have learnt to be with those who sing. I remember an occasion when he got so exasperated with a choir which would not stop singing the last six words of the *Te Deum* that he began to read the second lesson long before they had reached their last—he said fiftieth—“never be confounded.” I am not quite so passionate as he was, but I quite understood his feeling, having at times endured agonies of hope deferred during the more ornate settings of the Nicene Creed.

I suppose that all country curates do much the same things, and a chronicle of small parochial beer would make dull reading. The only useful thing I did outside of my proper work was to form a cricket club. There had not been such a thing in the parish before, and Mr. La Touche of Bellevue kindly gave me the use of a suitable piece of ground in his demesne. My idea was to play with the village lads and young men; but somehow or other the thing became attractive and numbers of unexpected people came to play with us. Among others was the Roman Catholic curate in charge of the parish. He was a friend of mine in spite—or perhaps because of the fact that he was not a favourite with the authorities of his own Church. He had been one of the few priests who ventured to support Parnell in public, when the Irish Roman Catholic Church joined hands with the English Nonconformists to drive that great man out of public life, acting on the principle that it is not the sin which matters—everybody had known about that all along—but the publicity. For this act of loyalty to his leader, which involved disloyalty to his bishops, my friend was punished with a persistent

vindictiveness, rare outside the Christian Church.

He was a man who did not care for running very much, and he was not a good cricketer, but he took great pleasure in batting. The rector of a neighbouring parish, Mr. Waller, afterwards Dean of Kildare, was another who used to come and play with us sometimes. He had been at Eton, and I think in the eleven there. At all events he was a fine cricketer, far better than any of us. I remember one afternoon that he and Father Hurley were in together. Waller had so completely mastered the bowling that he could do precisely what he liked with it, and so managed that Father Hurley hardly ever had a ball bowled to him. He was kept running Waller's runs for the best part of an hour on an extremely hot afternoon. I am inclined to think that that experience rather finished Father Hurley's cricket. Certainly he never would bat with Waller again. Another outsider who used to come and play with us was Erskine Childers, then only a schoolboy, who came with his cousin, Robert Barton, from Anamoe. They used to come in to supper with us after the game was over. His tragic fate makes a strange contrast to those pleasant days. If only he had been content to go on writing books like *The Riddle of the Sands*, and had left politics alone he might have been alive and a happy man to-day. But perhaps—who can tell?—he chose the better part. It may be better to die finely for a cause, even a doubtful one, than to live on comfortably until one has learned to sneer at all causes.

I was ordained in 1888, a little before the proper age. I think I was the first person in the disestablished Church of Ireland to obtain a faculty for that purpose. I was fortunate in the time of my ordination. I saw the last of the

old generation of pre-disestablishment clergy. The act of disestablishment came into force in 1870 and, at the date of my ordination, eighteen years later, a considerable number of men survived who belonged to the old order of things, having been ordained when disestablishment seemed still uncertain and, at worst, a long way off. Disestablishment and the disendowment which came with it, brought about a very great change in the kind of men who took Holy Orders and spent their lives in the service of the Church. Whether this change was for the better or the worse I do not feel myself called upon to judge. There is much to be said on both sides of the question, but there is no doubt whatever about the reality of the change. The clergy of the established Church, if rectors of their parishes, were the life owners of the property which belonged to their livings. After disestablishment they became salaried officials, dependent for their stipends to a very large extent, though not absolutely, on the good will of their parishioners. Obviously the one position is very different from the other. Instead of being independent men, responsible to no one on earth except their ecclesiastical superiors, they became the paid servants of their people, ministers in fact as well as in name. In many ways this was an advantage. The people of the parish acquired real power in the management of the Church affairs, the power of the purse which, at the last resort, can be used with deadly effect. On the other hand the loss of the old independence was bad for the clergy, and in the long run, I think, for the people, too. Fortunately there were things—too complicated to discuss here—which mitigated this evil and left the clergy with more independence than they seemed to have. But the change from one system to the

other was a drastic one, and the new clergy were very different men from their predecessors.

I consider myself fortunate in having worked, for a time at least, with men who belonged to the old order, who still had the old outlook on their office and their positions.

In one of his essays, Mr. J. A. Froude has described the clergy in County Wicklow in the middle of the nineteenth century, some years before my time. He was at that time a member of the household of Archdeacon Cleaver, who was then Rector of Delgany, and lived in the very house which afterwards became so familiar to me. I remember long before I went to Delgany, reading this essay with great interest, little thinking that I should ever know so well the men whom Froude described. The Wicklow clergy were a very friendly body, and I think they were all genuinely pious men in the old evangelical sense of that word. At our clerical meetings a considerable amount of the time was always spent in prayer. These prayers were extempore and very often there was a humorous side to the devotion. I was always very bad myself in the composition of extempore prayers, and when it came to my turn to address the Almighty I used to content myself with a repetition of a collect from the Prayer Book. This was not encouraged. Indeed, I think I was only forgiven for my lack of unction on the ground of my extreme youth and inexperience. Our custom was to kneel down at the chairs we had sat in, with our backs to each other and then turn about to pray aloud.

There was a Mr. Hallows, the Rector of Arklow, who considered it his duty to preach to the Roman Catholics in the streets of his parish with a view to converting them to what he regarded as a better faith. In these efforts he

was loyally supported by his curate. Unfortunately, the Roman Catholics did not like it. They showed their disapproval by hooting and booing and even throwing stones at Hallows, with the result that after a while he could only do his preaching under police protection. There is something to be said for propagating the faith under the protection of the civil power and the example of Paul's appeal to Claudius Lysias might be quoted. But the proceedings at Arklow were very unseemly and the position of Hallows' fellow clergy became difficult. We were all ready to admit that it was most desirable, not only in the interests of the souls of the Irish people, but for political considerations, that the Roman Catholics should be converted to the faith of the Church of Ireland, a creed which involved loyalty to the crown and constitution. Some of us even entertained a hope that this desirable religious movement was actually about to take place, and instances of individual conversions were quoted with joy. We were, I think, most of us, a little uncomfortable when we considered our own failure to make any effort to secure this great end. We could not help admitting that Mr. Hallows showed courage and energy far superior to ours.

At the same time, besides being, I think, good Christians. certainly good Protestants, we were most of us gentlemen by birth and education. Now a gentleman does not mix himself up in street brawls. It is contrary to his whole conception of his own position that he should suffer the indignity of being hooted and stoned by the corner boys of a small provincial town. We should, I think, if we had lived in primitive times, have shrunk from martyrdom, not because we were afraid to die for our faith—we could have done that—but because martyrdoms must have

appeared to those who witnessed them, as irredeemably vulgar affairs. We found ourselves in the position of men in whose hearts there was a religious conviction which would have led us to approve of Mr. Hallows; but who, as gentlemen, deprecated his action very strongly indeed.

When it came to the time for extempore prayers at one of our clerical meetings, this matter had to be laid before the Almighty. There was no getting out of that. But there was a feeling of awkwardness about doing it. The chairman of the meeting was the Archdeacon, an uncle of Ada's. He deserves a small niche in the temple of fame, because it was he who taught Parnell his catechism. He must, though he never said so, have regarded this afterwards as labour in vain. He was a great gentleman of the old Tory evangelical kind and the scenes in the streets of Arklow, when Hallows preached, disgusted him. It was his business, as chairman, to pray first. He was as nice as he could be, commending to God the zeal for the faith which had been shown in the Arklow preaching. But he went on to suggest that "Our brother, Hallows," might be granted a little more discretion in the conduct of his campaign. I happened to be kneeling between the archdeacon and Hallows. I could not refrain from peeping round to see how Hallows was taking it. He was in a state of nervous irritation, and no wonder. It is very unpleasant to be prayed about, especially by an archdeacon.

It was my turn to pray next. If I had been quick-witted, I should have said the collect for Quinquagesima Sunday and left it at that. But perhaps it was as well I did not do this. A prayer for charity could only have added to the general discomfort. I muttered some entirely inappropriate collect and then, not without pleasurable anticipa-

tion, awaited events. Hallows, who came next, grasped his opportunity and poured forth a prayer in which he asked the Almighty that "Our brother, the Archdeacon," should be saved from the snare of the worldly wisdom and given a little more of that evangelic courage which counts all things nought for the sake of the faith of the gospel. I cannot now remember what forms the petitions of the other brethren took, but I imagine they hedged a good deal, and I think it was a great credit to us that after that meeting we remained on thoroughly good terms with each other. There was no bitterness or ill feeling.

I should like to be able to believe that this friendliness was entirely due to our Christian spirit, but, looking back on things now, I think that the dinner which immediately followed the prayers had something to do with it. These meetings were held at various houses and it became the custom for the wives of the clergy to vie with each other in the production of feasts. In those days almost every clergyman was a teetotaller and only one or two men of the older school ventured on a glass of sherry. But what we missed in the way of alcoholic stimulant we made up for by eating enormously. We were most of us hungry by the time that we got to a three o'clock dinner and we sat down heartily to large joints of meat, dishes of boiled chickens and an abundance of excellent vegetables out of the rectory gardens. Then came huge tarts, with jugs of thick cream, common enough in those days, though rare now everywhere. When dinner was over, and our little irritating arguments and prayers were forgotten, we sat round the table for an hour or so and discussed some subject chosen by our host and chairman. These subjects were often of a highly controversial character. There was,

for instance, one of our number, a member of the early Tractarian school, the only one among us, who used to fire off at us something like this, "extra ecclesia nulla salus" or "nulla ecclesia sine episcopo." But after the dinners we had eaten, even such red rags were waved in vain at the faces of very placid bulls. It may have been the dinner that we had had that day at the Archdeacon's house which saved us from any kind of rift in our sense of brotherhood.

This habit of long extempore prayers was not confined to clerical meetings. We used to indulge in them in our own studies whenever we could manage to collect one or two of the brethren. I can remember one evening after some special service in the church my rector as usual on such occasions entertained the preacher. He was the Rev. Thomas Hackett, a fine scholar, and a most delightful man. We had supper together. Then for a while we smoked quietly, which shows that it cannot have been Lent, for at that season we stopped smoking and ate dried figs instead, which for some of us was a more drastic form of fasting than a substitution of a fried sole for a grilled chop at our evening meal. When it was time for Hackett to harness his horse to drive home, we knelt together and prayed. Hackett, as guest, prayed first. And he did pray. He went on and on and on at a most tremendous length. Beginning with the petitions for the welfare of the Church, working through the royal family, parliament, the army, the navy and the judiciary, he touched most of the prominent political questions of the day. Then took up the crops, markets, and the state of the weather. I began to feel that he was never going to stop. When at last he did, it was the turn of my rector, Canon Robinson. There was a long pause, during which I waited nervously. At

last, Hackett, who was on his knees, looked up and said: "It's your turn, Jack." Poor Robinson rose slowly from his knees with a kind of sickly smile and said: "Tommy, there is not one single thing left in heaven or earth to pray about." That evening at least I got off altogether, without even muttering my collect.

We carried this form of extempore into public services. But I have always thought it a great credit to us that we never used unauthorised prayers in our churches. We were loyal to the Prayer Book in a sense that modern Anglo-Catholics are not. If we wanted to do or say anything which was not in the Prayer Book we left the church and went to a school-room to do it. There we had all sorts of fancy services, extempore prayers and odd hymns of the Moody and Sankey kind, which we should have thought unseemly to sing in church. When we were in church we kept ourselves within the two covers of the Book of Common Prayer and never strayed outside them. I do not know if this is a better plan than that adopted by the Anglo-Catholics who introduce fancy devotions into their services in church. It appears that everyone who is very much in earnest finds sooner or later that he needs something which is not in the Prayer Book. Those old evangelical Irish clergy felt this, just as the advanced Anglo-Catholics do. Which is the better, to turn a school-room into a kind of supplementary church for the purpose of these extraordinary devotions, or to ignore the plain rules of the Prayer Book and use the church itself? It is a difficult question to answer, but I am inclined to think that while logic is on the one side of the evangelical practice, the Anglo-Catholics' plan is on the whole the more profitable.

A remarkable thing used to take place in Delgany parish at the end of one year and the beginning of another. On the last day of the old year we had a decorous evensong in the church with a couple of nice simple hymns. Then we went to the school-room for what we called a watch-night service and there had an orgy of emotionalism which I do not think could be bettered at a midnight mass on Christmas Eve. On the next morning we assembled at eight o'clock for a celebration of the Holy Communion in the church, and read the gospel, epistle and a collect for the feast of The Circumcision, portions of the scripture which were quite out of accord with the feelings which moved us at the time. Then after the benediction had been pronounced, we trooped off, still without breakfast, to the schoolroom and had a prayer-meeting, with fervent petitions for our safety during the coming year. After that we went home and had our breakfasts and began our normal life again.

It was after I had been at Delgany about a year, very shortly after I received priest's orders, that the greatest happiness of my life came to me: my marriage with Ada Wynne. We were both very young and I think younger than our years, less sophisticated and less accustomed to the ways of the world than most people at the age of twenty-four. Our honeymoon, which we spent in London, seemed to us a wild adventure. We went night after night to the theatre, an excitement even greater for Ada than it was for me. Like me she had been brought up in the strictly Puritan tradition, and, before her marriage, had only once been in a theatre. I had been there often, but never without a haunting sense of wrong-doing. On our honeymoon we made up our minds that theatre-going was

not wrong, and that we would indulge in it as much as we possibly could. To gratify a taste for sermons, my taste, but never Ada's, we went on Sundays and on weekday evenings not given to the theatre to hear famous preachers. We did not confine ourselves to the Church of England, but "sat under" Spurgeon in his tabernacle and, I think, Parker in the City Temple. We even attended a Roman Catholic service and heard a sermon at the Carmelite Chapel. We dined almost every night at a little restaurant in Oxford Street which remains to this day unchanged. That in itself was for us an adventurous thing to do. So were our visits to Hungarian teashops, just then popular in London, where highly ornamental cakes, now commonplace enough, were offered to the public for the first time.

We lived after our marriage in a little cottage with rooms so small that when I stood up in the middle of the dining-room I could touch the walls on each side of me with my outstretched hands, and the ceiling above my head without standing on tiptoe. We were very poor. Indeed, looking back on those days, I wonder how we ever had the courage to launch into matrimony on the income we had, and I wonder still more that Canon Wynne, my father-in-law, consented to the marriage. But he was the least worldly of men and believed then, as I believe still, that love is far more important than money, and that happiness depends very little on the abundance of the things which we possess. And yet money is a thing that even the most ardent lovers cannot ignore. After a short period of married life we found ourselves in trouble over a coal bill. It was not, looking back on it now, a very terrible bill, for it amounted to something under ten pounds. But it was quite beyond our power to pay it. I do

not remember that we were seriously depressed, but we did sit down to consider what steps we ought to take to meet the emergency. I suppose that thousands of people in our position have hit on the same solution. It was determined that I should write a story, and send it to a first-rate magazine and get paid for it, paid enough to enable us to meet the demands of the coal merchant. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred this plan does not work, and I should never recommend anybody else to adopt it. It is not so easy as it looks to write a story, and it is far more difficult than it sounds to get it published, at least to get it published by anyone who will pay for it. I wrote my story, based on an experience in the parish, and sent it off to *Temple Bar*, then a high-class magazine and with a good circulation among educated people. It was at once accepted. It was also paid for. I received a cheque for the ten pounds we wanted and although the coal merchant had been paid long before from other sources, the money was welcome.

The writing of that story had another consequence quite unforeseen, which worked out in rather a curious way. A firm of London publishers, no doubt struck by my story, asked me to write a novel for them. I do not know whether this sort of thing happens now or whether it happened often then. Perhaps the supply of novels was very much less than the demand in those days, and that there was a dearth of authors. The firm which made the proposal went out of existence soon afterwards, so perhaps it was an inefficient firm and their writing to me was simply a sign of their want of business ability. But I was naturally greatly pleased. Ada was a little doubtful and was not quite so elated as I was. I sat down to write the

novel, and two or three years ago, I came across the manuscript of the first few chapters which had somehow survived many holocausts of old papers. I cannot imagine that if the novel had been finished anyone would have ever published it. I have seldom read anything worse than those first chapters. But there was never any question of publication, for I did not finish the book. When I had been at it about a week or ten days we had a serious talk over the whole subject and Ada put the matter straight to me from her point of view. She said, and quite rightly, that I could not devote myself entirely to the work of the Church if I spent a considerable part of my time writing novels. It was a choice between two professions. When the thing was put to me that way I had no difficulty in making my choice. I did want to be a faithful and good clergyman. I did not particularly want to be a novelist. Indeed, I should never have attempted anything of the kind then or afterwards except under the pressure of the want of money. We therefore dropped the whole idea of story-writing or novel-writing and it was not for fifteen or sixteen years that we took it up again.

In the meanwhile my mind was fully occupied with a totally different subject. In County Wicklow we were almost all, as I have tried to suggest, evangelicals of the old-fashioned kind. Hardly a breath of the Oxford Movement had blown over us, and I was wholly ignorant of the ways of Anglo-Catholics. Bishop Moule was at that time publishing some little books which dealt with religious life. Several of my fellow clergy were interested in them and tried to develop their own spiritual life along the lines suggested by Bishop Moule. I did not become a disciple of this school of thought, but I was greatly interested

in the fact that there seemed, according to this teaching, to be two kinds of Christian life. I had always known and admired the ordinary normal life of the man who does his duty, says his prayers, and believes the main articles of the Christian faith. By Bishop Moule's teaching I learnt that there was a kind of inner circle which aimed at a higher life, more spiritual, more devoted, not without a slight contempt for the ordinary Christian life. The idea was puzzling because it was quite new to me.

We set to work, Ada and I, to thrash the matter out with the aid of our Bibles and such books of a devotional kind as we could lay our hands on. It was then that I first read Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*, Bishop Hall and Law's *Serious Call*. It was then that I became deeply interested in the *Imitatio Christi*. Once we started on this course we found ourselves led further and further. But it was really later, after we had left Delgany, that we got involved in the study of the origins of Christian Monasticism. There was very little to be found about this in the standard books of Church History which we had at our disposal. There was indeed very little written on the subject in the English language at all. We were obliged to go back to the original documents, and I found that my knowledge of classical Greek acquired at school and college was of great use to me in reading the works of the early Fathers. We also had to learn German. Ada had a schoolgirl's knowledge of the language, I had practically none. But we scorned such methods as beginning with grammar and simple exercises. We plunged straight into the works of Otto Zöckler, Harnack and others, with no better help than that offered us by a dictionary. Evening after evening we sat together over our work. Ada had the German book on her

knees and I used to sit on the floor at her feet with the dictionary in my hands. Very slowly and very laboriously we acquired a working knowledge of the kind of German that theologians write; something, as I found out afterwards, quite different from the German of poets and novelists. But we only began this work in Delgany. It was afterwards in Westport that we did most of it.

We were, I think, happy in spite of our poverty during those early years, especially after our eldest boy, Robert, was born. In spite of her care of her baby and all she did in our little cottage Ada worked with me in the parish. Indeed, then and always afterwards, we had no separate interests either in hours of work or in hours of pleasure. I think that there can hardly have been a thought in either of our minds which the other did not share, and even our most secret prayers were no secret from each other.

This life in Delgany might have gone on for years if there had not come a rupture in the very pleasant relations which existed between the Robinsons and us. There was trouble in the parish and unfortunately my rector and I took different views of it. I think that Mrs. Robinson felt even more strongly about it than the rector did, and Ada was naturally enough on my side. It would be wrong to say that there was any break in the real affection which Canon Robinson and I had for each other. We remained to the very end of our controversy firm friends. And I am deeply thankful to feel that the friendship lasted as long as he lived. But my position in Delgany became impossible.

It happened just at the moment, when things were most difficult in Delgany, that a living in the far west of Ireland became vacant. Canon Hemphill, who had done great

work in Westport, moved to another and more important parish.

Someone suggested that we should go to Westport if we could. I jumped at the idea. I wanted to get out of Delgany and I was really attracted by the thought of working in a remote place like County Mayo. There was always in both of us a desire for adventure and it seemed to be an adventurous thing to go into the very wildest part of the west of Ireland. My father-in-law, Canon Wynne, whom, of course, we consulted, was strongly opposed to our going. He took the view that if I went to Westport I should stay there, permanently burying myself. He wanted me instead to accept an important Dublin curacy. I have not the slightest doubt that this was right, because if I had gone to that Dublin curacy I might have been promoted, as it is called in the Church, and might have ended my life as an archdeacon or, with great good luck, as a bishop.

But the adventure was more attractive than the curacy. We put aside the words of wisdom and made up our minds to go to Westport if the living was offered to us. After some hesitation and, I suppose, consultation, it was offered to us. Such offices as I have held in the Church have never come to me through ecclesiastical authority, but always through laymen who hold some local control over Church affairs. It was thus in the case of Westport. I owe my appointment to that living to two men: Lord John Browne, afterwards Marquess of Sligo, and Mr. William Livingstone. I think they were wrong in appointing to such a living a man so young and inexperienced as I was. I was not quite twenty-seven years of age when I went to Westport, became rector of a parish, and responsible for a curate whom I was not fit to control. I remained in that

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parish for twenty-one years. I suppose I made every conceivable mistake which a young man put into a position too difficult for him could make. I can only say that however foolishly I acted I could always depend on the friendship and help of Lord John Browne and William Livingstone while he lived, and of another of my parishioners, Mr. Thomas Ruttledge.

CHAPTER V

WE spent twenty-one years in Westport, the best years of our lives, for our physical and mental powers were at their height. During more than half of that time we were poor, not so poor that we went hungry, though we were often badly off for clothes and had no money to spare even for the cheapest luxuries and pleasures. My clerical income did not amount to £400 a year. We had little else, and we had certain obligations which had to be met. After my father's death I became partly responsible for my youngest brother's education and partly also for the support of my mother. This meant a perpetual struggle for Ada and an unceasing watching of every penny. Yet—so little has wealth or poverty to do with happiness—those were good years, full of interests, full of pleasures, and, thank God, rich in love.

Our eldest child, Robert, was only a baby when we went to Westport. Our other three children were born there. The three eldest were brought up there and came to regard that western country as their home. I can imagine no happier place for children and no better beginning of life than those early years which they spent there.

Westport was, judged by English standards, a very large parish. It extended about seventeen miles from east to west, and about six miles from north to south. The town of Westport, where my rectory and parish were, stood almost in the middle of the parish. To the east were miles of stony, almost treeless hills. Westwards the parish

stretched along the southern shore of Clew Bay and, on the northern shore, along a promontory called Carrowholly. There were four churches, afterwards five, to be served by me and my curate. But though the distances were great, the number of the church people were small. Ninety-five per cent of the inhabitants of the parish were Roman Catholics. My flock never exceeded six hundred in number and during later years was much smaller.

In writing about our lives in Westport, I think it better to give up the plan of following the passing years. To write four chapters headed "1892 to 1898," "1898 to 1903," and so on, would merely lead to confusion and end without getting any real idea of what life was for us. I prefer to take one by one the three main interests in our lives: the parish, that is to say, the people and our work among them; my writing, by which we emerged from poverty into the region of comfort and moderate affluence; and politics, in which we involved ourselves, foolishly no doubt, but with the result of discovering new interests and unexperienced excitements.

But first I shall try, in this chapter, to give some idea of what the country itself was like, and especially to describe, if description is possible, the wonderful bay at the eastern end of which Westport was. This little sketch, rescued from a pile of old papers, belongs, in point of time, to our later years in Westport, a time when we were sufficiently well off to have a boat of our own. I put it here, out of its proper place, because it gives a description, though feeble and insufficient, of our wonderful bay.

The morning was hot, with promise of more heat to come. Here, on the Connaught coast, we are little accustomed to heat. We pant and gasp when it comes on us

suddenly, cast off all garments which can be reckoned as superfluous, and regard work as entirely impossible until we get back to our normal damp mildness of weather. The dust lies inches deep on our light limestone roads. The wayfarer curses all wheeled vehicles which stir it, and bitterly curses the motor-cars which raise smothering clouds of it as they pass. I was powdered from head to foot with dust and sweating most uncomfortably when I reached the shore of the bay. But there my reward began. My companion was no better off, though her cotton frock gave her a look of coolness.

A hundred yards from the land lay our boat. She swung from her anchor on the strong current of a flowing tide. She veered, heeled and swooped as each puff of breeze filled her sails. Here beside us, high and dry on the muddy sand, lay our punt, the kind of boat called a dinghy in England. Dusty shoes are kicked off. Hot stockings and socks stripped from hot legs. We seize the dinghy, lift her stern and pull her down, splashing deliciously through tepid shallow waters. She floats at last. We climb on board and pole her out through the deepening water. We reach the boat. The jib is hoisted, moorings dropped, the main-sail boomed out to catch what little wind there is, heat-laden easterly wind. We slip slowly out into the bay, just stemming the flow of the tide.

Our bay is wonderful always; wonderful when the misty winter rain hangs over it like a curtain and the water is grey; wonderful when storms raise short, angry waves, and blow clouds of spray off the surface of it to drench our fields and dim our window-panes with crusted salt; wonderful when the sea fog creeps over it from the remote ocean, insidious, ghostly, terrifying; but most wonderful

of all in the blaze of the summer sunshine.

Far out lies Clare Island—"clear, bare, Clare," a poet called it—a purple mountain, a crouching sentinel, guarding us from the Atlantic; guarding, perhaps, from our eyes the vision of the islands of the Blest which surely lie out there somewhere, to be found if we dared sail out far enough. Nearer than Clare is the line of smaller islands, the rocks and the piled dykes of sand and shingle which shut us in. Between them, through tortuous passages, the tide comes to flood our bay. It draws in from the ocean itself. It is perplexed and puzzled among our islands. It pauses in its course, turns backward here, swirls in oily eddies there, rushes like a river down some stony path, meets a sister river suddenly. Little wavelets rise from its smooth surface and clap their hands together. Lips are pressed out to meet lips in rapid, rapturous kisses. Then, dragging streaming banners of brown seaweed along with them, the sister tides, lover tides, reunited, flow on together again. There is Inishgowlan, the island of the fork, and Inishraher, the island of the two mounds, and Inisheeny, beautifully named islands with their white cottages and scanty, stone-walled fields and lean kine. Here, right ahead of us, is Annagh, a promontory at most times, an island when a spring tide is full.

Now the easterly wind fails us altogether. Doubtless we shall get wind again, a little of it, southerly perhaps at noon, westerly in the evening, for on a day like this the wind will follow the sun in its course. In the meanwhile it has gone. The tiller is useless in my hand. The sail swings slowly over, now to this side, now to that, while the block of the sheet bangs the combing of the cockpit. The boat, caught helplessly in the tide, drifts past Annagh,

floating sideways, shorewards. Lest we get among the shallows we drop anchor and lie altogether motionless. From the nearer shore come quite clearly to us the shouts and the splashing sound of boys who bathe. We can see the gleam of their bodies and guess their glee. From the farther northern shore come other shouts, shriller, of younger children bathing, too. Between us and this more distant party drifts slowly eastwards a white-sailed boat. The main current of the tide has her in tow and bears her on. She has, besides, what we have not, a faint breath of wind, drawing from the west, half-filling her sails. We speculate idly about her. We peer at her through our glasses. We agree that she must be the Gavin's boat, and that Tom Gavin had got a new suit of sails. The Gavins come from, own, perhaps, one of the furthest islands. They fish lobsters, and doubtless now have a cargo on board; greeny black lobsters, writhing slowly together in creels of dripping seaweed. These they will sell, carrying them to the doors of the "houses of the gentry who live along the shore."

All there is to be guessed about the drifting boat we have guessed, and she ceases to interest us. I fall to gazing at the glowing surface and into the cool clearness of the water. A sea-bird, black and white, short, fat and stumpy, floats down on us. It gazes fearlessly with bright, unblinking eyes until it comes within a few feet of us. There is a slight splash and gurgling eddy. It has dived and gone. A cormorant, starting suddenly from the shore at Annagh, splashes the water with breast and feet. Rising a little, it flies swiftly across our bows, with outstretched neck and long wings beating downwards which touch the water with their tips at the end of every stroke. Behind the bird,

in the track of its flight, are two straight lines of broken water. So quiet is the flow of the tide that these remain visible long after the bird has gone. Beneath the surface are fleets of jelly-fish, marvellously coloured. Their round, transparent backs are rested against the flow of the tide. With lazy, luxurious extendings and contractings of the rims of their saucer-like bodies, they oar themselves slowly past us. Far down I see now and then a flat-fish speed like a shadow along the bottom, stirring as it starts into a yet swifter motion little eddies of sand.

So we sit, sea-soaked, sun-soaked, enervated as never lotus-eater was, remote utterly, incredibly, from the pulsing, feverish life of Ireland. Patriots, priests, politicians, men of the dusty ways, mean almost nothing to us here. It is good to forget it all; the clash of mean selfishness with high endeavour, the hope and the dread and the disappointment. Only, though I forget, there is the inescapable consciousness of Ireland, "Breaking the hearts of her sons, breaking the hearts of her lovers."

Long before we had a boat of our own we learned something of them in a small steam-boat owned by my friend, Mr. Tom Ruttledge, who had a passion for navigating these coasts. We were too poor at that time to own a boat, and if it had not been for Mr. Ruttledge and his little steamer, we should have gone for years without any knowledge of this fascinating coast. The steamer was called the *Phœnix*, an appropriate name, for she once caught fire and was only saved with difficulty and rebuilt, rising from her own ashes. She was not, I think, a very safe boat for the navigation of the wild water outside our sheltering fringe of islands. But Tom Ruttledge was a daring if not a rash voyager and often made his way as far as Galway

Bay. There was one occasion—I was not with him at the time—when he visited Innishboffin, an island lying south of Clare Island. The weather turned bad after he reached the island. He and his party were kept there for more than a week, with no telephone by which to send messages to anxious people at home. Once their own provisions were exhausted they had nothing to live on except lobsters, potatoes and poteen whisky. It was an exciting adventure and I was always sorry that I did not share it. But I once had a similar experience when I went with him to Killary Bay. Having lunched at the head of the bay, we set out for home about three o'clock in the afternoon. It was blowing a little, though not enough to frighten us. Killary Bay is a long, narrow inlet with mountains on each side very like some of the fjords I have seen in Norway. The water in the bay is always calm and it is not easy to guess what the sea is like outside. We discovered as we steamed between the rocky islands at the mouth of the bay that there was a heavy sea running outside. Our difficulty was to make the passage to Runagh Point at the south-western corner of Clew Bay. If we could round that, we could turn eastwards and run into shelter with the seas behind us. But from the mouth of Killary to Runagh Point the sea was rough, and under our lee was a stretch of shelterless coast, guarded by reefs, on which we could see the water breaking. Soon the waves were coming over us and washing knee-deep across the decks. Our fear was that they would extinguish our engine-fires. If that had happened we should have been completely helpless and would have been driven sideways to certain destruction. We took the risk of bringing the boat head to sea, turning round and struggling back to Killary Bay. There we had

to spend the night at the little hotel at Leenane without as much as a toothbrush among us. But we were better off than we should have been on Innishboffin. There was dinner for us and bedrooms. Although we were without what the newspapers, describing fires, call "night attire" we managed to sleep well enough.

For sheer wild beauty the entrance to Killary Bay surpasses anything I have ever seen, though it lacks something of the grim majesty of my beloved Antrim coast. But it is not scenery which appeals to everyone. I remember a day on which Mr. George Moore, an old friend of Tom Ruttledge's, was a guest on the *Phœnix*. Thinking to please and excite him with what always delighted us, we took him round Killary Bay. During the long steam westwards to Runagh Point, he sat doggedly in the little cabin of the yacht, which, to tell the truth, was always stuffy and generally smelly. We turned southwards and, with the Atlantic swell rolling us gunwale under, saw Innishboffin and Innisturk, grey islands, crouching like frightened creatures with their backs humped against the western gales. To the east was the long jagged coast of the mainland. We could see the surf surging over half-submerged rocks, the rollers trampling the long strands. Behind stood the towering mountains of that lost land. Still George Moore sat sullenly in that cabin and he had not even the excuse of being sea-sick. At last we reached the entrance of Killary Bay, the supreme beauty spot of all our voyage. So narrow is the entrance and so close to each other the low rocks which guard it that it would almost be possible to leap ashore from the boat's deck. Tom Ruttledge put his head into the cabin and hailed the half-recumbent Moore. "Come on deck, George," he said. "You must see

this." "See what?" growled George. "Mountains, I suppose; nasty conceited things sticking up into the sky. Give me a brook with some trees." Well. We could not give him brooks or trees. There are few trees, and only mountain torrents instead of brooks in that wild land.

A favourite expedition was to Achill Island, where we used to trawl, though I think not very successfully. I can remember one or two good catches, but for some reason or another Mr. Ruttledge's boat was not very successful in this kind of fishing. After I had been some years in Westport, I did have one glorious night's fishing at Kim Bay, a little sandy inlet between Achill Head and the cliffs of the Croghaun. I had gone to Achill this time not for pleasure, but on the perfectly legitimate business of inspecting schools. There were only two church schools on the island and I inspected them both on the same day, riding many miles to do so. Then I went on to the house of a friend of mine, a retired sea-captain, an Englishman, who had for some reason or other settled down to spend his last years in this *Ultima Thule*. His house, a white-washed cottage, was near the village of Keel, the most primitive and utterly poverty-stricken village I have ever seen. Knowing my fondness for the sea he arranged with some local fishermen to take me out for the night in one of their currachs. The curragh is a long narrow canvas-built boat. So long as she is kept on the sea and away from rocks she is safe if skilfully managed. She will ride dry in any sea and float like a feather over the foaming tops of breaking waves. But, of course, being made of canvas, the merest touch of a rock would rip the bottom out of her.

My host and I arrived at Porteen, "the little haven," for

that is what the name means. It was seven o'clock, and the surging of the water was already eloquent with that peculiar sadness which comes upon the sea in the evening, especially with an ebbing tide. This is one of the most noticeable emotions of the sea. Even the old Hebrew prophets, who knew little of the sea, though they knew all things else, observed it. "There is sorrow upon the sea," said one of them, "so that it cannot rest." I have no doubt that when he spoke he was looking on the waves in their mood of evening melancholy.

Four men stood waiting for me beside their curragh, the most primitive kind of boat there is in the world. In just such water-proof baskets the first of our race must have ventured, centuries before history began, upon the sea. Now, in the twentieth century, the curragh survives, practically unchanged and unimproved; what is more strange, for certain kinds of work, unimprovable. It is still the best boat there is in the surf round rocks, or among the long breakers on a sandy shore. The men looked at each other when they saw me, and I felt rather than saw a half-smile in their glances. I came among them a stranger with a reputation. My host was responsible for that. He had, I gathered, represented me as a boatman of skill and daring. These Achill islanders had made up their minds to test my nerve. They would take me, and they did take me, into places which would have brought disaster upon any other kind of boat, places which they rightly calculated which would be strange and fearful to me.

We launched the curragh and embarked. We headed towards the distant Kim Bay, where we meant to fish. We pulled five oars. To me it seemed strange that the odd oar should be put out on to the windward side of the

boat. But the curragh is a curious craft. You manage her by an inversion of all the ordinary rules of seamanship. We crept along as close as possible to the shore, fringed with black jagged rocks, so close that we sometimes floated in the foamy backwash of the breaking waves.

"If you touched that fellow," I said, pointing to a savage-looking tooth of rock, "there'd be a rip in the bottom of the curragh in half a second."

"It would be easy mended, then," said one of the rowers. "We'd put a bit of paper over it and melt the tar on top of it with a lighted match."

I daresay this is true, but I am not over-anxious to test it. I do not so hunger for strange experiences as to want to tempt fate with no more than a sheet of paper between me and the Atlantic Ocean. We passed through a passage between two grim masses of rock, a passage which an active man could have leaped across. The waves surged into either end of it, broke up against rocks, drew back to meet other advancing waves, buffeted each other into steep, rugged crests. The whole surface was a mass of seething, swirling foam. Once by stretching out my hand I could have touched a flat, limpet-covered shelf of rock, flecked with the spume of rushing water. Our four rowers steadied the curragh, swept her round, swept her forward. No words passed among them. Each man acted for himself, but all seemed moved by some common instinct, by an incredible inborn skill.

Afterwards we skirted high cliffs. The cormorants, perched above our heads, peered down at us with their narrow cruel eyes. Circling gulls and terns shrieked at us. The waves swung us up upon their very crests and then crashed noisily against the cliffs within a few feet of us.

We passed by caves, and from them came the hollow roar of the great surges which lashed sides and stony roofs somewhere far out of sight in fearful darkness. Once we paused and pushed our way stern first into a cave. Heavy drops of water from the roof suddenly fell on us. The sea crashed behind us, roared in front of us. We shouted together and beat our oars against the gunwale of the curragh. We succeeded at last in frightening from their nests a whole flock of pigeons. They went flapping wildly over our heads, and we yelled again to speed their terrified flight.

We came at last to our bay, the very last in all this desolate island coast. Achill Head, facing the Atlantic, casts behind it a sheltering arm round Kim Bay. High cliffs rise on either side of the bay, and its shoreward end is the steep green slope of the towering mountain of Croaghaun. It was getting dark then, and the rollers broke sullenly on the sandy beach. We landed on the rocks at the westward side of the bay, and then the work of the evening began. The net, which lay hidden in the forlorn ruin of a hut, was carried down and piled in the stern of the curragh. Then, two men aboard of her, the boat put out, pushing her way through a smother of surf and breaking waves. Sometimes she reared like a wild horse, standing for an instant on her stern with her curved bow pointing to the sky. The rower, his oars outstretched in the air, waited calmly, balanced on his seat, until she fell forward and he could grip the water again. Then the curragh shot out, till the next breaker caught her and she reared once more. All the while a man in the stern was paying out the rope of which we, who stood on shore, held the end. Then, hand over hand, he flung the net into the sea and we dimly

discerned the curved line of its floating corks. The boat made a wide circle and dropped two hundred and fifty yards of net, weighted and floated, as she went. She returned to the shore fifty yards or so away from where we stood.

Then came the slow work of hauling. We pulled at our end of the rope, dragging the net slowly shorewards foot by foot with heavy toil. We gripped the rope, passed it over our shoulders and step by step with bent backs dragged our way up the beach. At a certain point every man dropped the rope, ran down until he stood ankle-deep in the water, gripped again, and again began the slow ascent. As the net itself came home, we edged gradually nearer our fellow labourers who hauled on the other rope. At first we saw them dimly, black figures patched against a grey background, sloped in their pulling so that, not seeing the rope on which they leaned, it was impossible to imagine why they should not fall. At last we came together and the net itself was in our hands. Standing in shallow water we pulled it hand over hand. We saw the splashing of the fish in the bag of it. We gathered it in and stood with our booty flapping against our feet and legs: white trout, sole, turbot, plaice, codling, gurnet, scores of coal-fish, skates, dog-fish, one great salmon, a twenty-pounder, and numberless crabs. It was a great haul. We flung them into a sack, filled it and fetched another sack. We took all that were worth taking, groping with our hands for the brown-backed sole and turbot which we could not see. The skates and dog-fish were left on the beach. The crabs we smashed, trampling them with our boots, because it is almost impossible to disentangle their claws from the meshes of the net.

"Look there!" cried one of the men suddenly. "Isn't it we who have the luck to-night?"

Twenty yards from the shore floated a dim black shape, monstrous in the gloom. It disappeared, appeared again, a rounded smooth thing, horribly suggestive of danger.

"What is it?" I asked.

"A shark," he said. "A basking shark. I mind the time when one of them got into the net. We were out after him, beating at his head with the oars, but he got the net torn in spite of us, and, what's more, he very nearly had the curragh upset. They're terribly dangerous, them basking sharks."

The row home was the most wonderful part of the whole expedition. It was as dark as it ever is, far north here, in the month of June. The water was phosphorescent when the oars splashed into it. The bases of the cliffs where the waves broke, shone with tiny sparks, lit and quenched in millions every second, flashing and extinct while the eye caught their light. The broken water looked at moments like a sheet of strange white fire. Far up above us, lost in utter gloom, were the summits of the cliffs. They overhung us, and there came, to me at least, a sense of awe from their dark immensity and from the melancholy rise and fall of the sea's roar as it beat against them. We shot through the narrow passage between the rocks again, and I felt as the shining water surged and foamed around us—felt, I think, for the first time in my life—the terror of the sea. It was two o'clock in the morning, or thereabouts, when we landed, and we discussed, I remember, the faint light in the sky, wondering whether it was the last legacy of yesterday's sun or the first promise of the day that was before us.

CHAPTER VI

WESTPORT is a small country town, situated in the extreme west of County Mayo, the most desolate and backward county in the whole of Ireland. It was told that when asked where he came from an inhabitant of this county used to say: "I'm a County Mayo man. God help me." In 1892 when I went to Westport it was the terminus station of the Irish Midland Railway. The trains which went there from Dublin were few and extremely slow. The mail, which was the one fast train, contained only first and second-class carriages, so that humbler people who had to travel as cheaply as possible could not use it. For them there was a choice of two trains, both of which took seven hours to make their journey from Dublin. There were, of course, no motors then, so Westport was greatly isolated. There was no big city more accessible than Dublin and it seemed a very long way off.

An Irish country town is usually a higgledy-piggledy affair, sordid and mean, built without any idea of making the most of the site, which is often beautiful. Westport, alone of Irish towns known to me, was planned, and planned with a certain feeling for dignity and beauty. Originally, I believe, the chief part of the town was beside the quay, where ships and boats lay in the tidal harbour. The houses straggled inland and the church stood half a mile east of the quay. Then it occurred to the Marquess of Sligo—all this was very long ago—to divide the town into two parts. The warehouses at the quay

remained. The rest of the town was removed inland. He built the present town in a pleasant and spacious fashion. The principal street is wide and straight, ending in the gates of the demesne. Down the middle of the street runs the river, with low walls on its banks. On each side of it is a carriage road with footpaths for pedestrians. The houses were built in the dignified Georgian fashion.

I do not suppose that the town would be admired by the architects of our garden cities, but it is a very early example of the town-planning which has become fashionable of late. South of the Mall, on the side of a steep hill, is a square on which stands a statue of one Glendenning, an eighteenth-century agent of the Sligo family. Many traditions survive about this man who ruled this town as a dictator in those far-away days, not always beneficently. It used to be said that the people erected the statue in thankfulness for his death, but the inscription on it does not say this. In the centre street is the Roman Catholic church, in those days a singularly ugly building. Someone had originally carved over the door the text from the Douay translation of the Bible in which the patriarch Jacob says: "This is an awful place. This is none other than the house of God." The first clause evidently struck succeeding generations as an unfortunate description of a church, but they did not like to discard the whole text. They planed away the letters of the first clause, leaving a long blank at the end of which came: "This is the house of God." My church stood a little way north of the central street. It was quite modern, being, I believe, the last church erected by the ecclesiastical commissioners before disestablishment. They achieved a more graceful spire than was usual in their work. But the church itself was

uninteresting and unattractive, except for the beautiful mural decorations put up from time to time by the Sligo family. These were, I think, unique. The walls of the church between the windows were covered with large pictures, cut on white marble, the lines being filled in with hard black cement. The whole background was gilt. There was also some modern carving done by the same artist who carved the grotesque figures on the exterior of Kildare Street Club, in Dublin.

The rectory was a very gracious house, situated on a hill, with a broad lawn in front of it and a winding drive leading up to the door. It was built in 1798 and had the dignified proportions of the Georgian work of those days. The rooms were lofty with large windows, and there was none of the architectural fussiness which is so common in our newer houses. Unfortunately, with the total disregard for the comfort of servants common in those days, there was a dark basement. Originally the servants slept in this place. The rooms were without light or ventilation. Under modern conditions they could not possibly be used as sleeping-places for human beings. One of my predecessors built a wing on to the house. He was, I believe, his own architect. He achieved a curious entrance to the wing. You went half-way up the main staircase of the house and then found on your right an opening in the wall leading down as many steps as you had gone up. This took you into a long dark passage off which were three very charming rooms, one of which I used for a study for years. The other two were servants' bedrooms. I tried to improve the house by adding a bathroom. I found it impossible to arrange one except by dividing a large pantry with a wooden partition. This plan necessitated either going

through the pantry, where a maid was probably washing-up, in order to get into the bathroom: or going through the bathroom to get to the pantry. We preferred the former plan and after a time it seemed quite natural to us to reach our bath in this way, but it always struck strangers as rather odd, and when our visitors were English they expressed a feigned delight with the arrangement which they spoke of as "thoroughly Irish." For a long time, relying on the honour of our servants, we had no lock or bolt on the bathroom door. An English don from Oxford, who rented the house one summer, wrote to me asking permission to put a bolt on the bathroom door. I allowed him to do so, though the request surprised me as much as the absence of a bolt surprised him.

In this house three of my children were born, only the eldest having been born at Delgany and brought to Westport as a baby. I always think that my children were singularly happy in the place of their bringing up. They had a wild, wide country and a great bay in which the three eldest were taught to sail boats and to swim. After a time I acquired the possession of an island in the bay with a tiny cottage on it. To this the children used to go in summer-time with a sailing-boat which they anchored off the cottage. There they lived for weeks at a time, a life of glorious freedom, sailing, fishing, swimming and looking after their house and their cooking. The two girls, Theodosia and Althea, were very early in life given a boat of their own with a small lug sail. In this, while still quite children, they were encouraged to go out, though strict bounds were set to their voyaging. They were not allowed to go beyond certain islands, but on these islands they were free to land and picnic. Until these girls went to

school in Dublin they lived this kind of life, wild and independent, and I can imagine no better way of bringing up children.

It was possible in those days to live comfortably in Mayo on a very small income. Food prices were low. The wages of a servant began at eight pounds a year for an untrained girl, and for a cook sixteen pounds a year was considered a high wage. It must be remembered that an unskilled labourer earned no more than nine shillings and sixpence a week, so that the wages paid to a servant corresponded pretty closely to the general average of earnings. Many of the girls who came into the house were wild and untrained to an extent hardly possible for people who live in England to imagine. I remember one girl who was brought to us by her father and whom Ada ultimately engaged as a housemaid. Before the matter was settled the father insisted on seeing me, and when I interviewed him he said: "If Molly (I think Molly was her name) doesn't behave herself, take the stick to her and lay it on good and strong. It is the only way to get any goodness into girls like that. It's the way I've brought her up and she's well accustomed to it." This was not very encouraging to people who had never beaten a girl and did not want to, but Molly was engaged. Alas, the result was not satisfactory. Molly ran away from us in the middle of the night about three weeks after she came, taking with her all the clothes we had given her. Her father came back a few days afterwards, returning the clothes and greatly lamenting his daughter's flight. He was a little inclined to blame me for not treating her as he advised and perhaps he was right. Molly might have stayed longer if she had been beaten every day. Her mother was tearfully apologetic.

"There she is," she said, "on the top of me in my little houseen and what have I to give her only the daylight." It seemed an unsubstantial diet, but Molly evidently preferred it, with freedom and the stick, to flesh-pots and servitude in our house.

The following story, culled from what if I were an historian I should call a contemporary record, will illustrate the difficulties, pleasures and pathos of housekeeping in the early days of our life at Westport.

"The fact is," said Ada, "that Biddy Canavan simply can't wash, and there's no use scolding her."

I was complaining of the condition of a flannel shirt which had been returned to me in a curiously greasy state, considerably shrunk, and smelling strongly of soap. I felt bitterly on the subject, because the shirt was a new one.

"Why don't you dismiss her," I said, "and get someone who can wash?"

"She has three small children, and her husband is dead," said Ada. "I don't know what would happen to her if she lost her day's work here."

Biddy Canavan earns one and sixpence a week from us for one day's work. She also has a shilling a week as outdoor relief from the union. That, so far as we can find out, is her whole income, and she lives on it, she and her three small children. I do not know how the thing is done, but plainly it would be much more difficult to do if the one and sixpence which we pay was taken away from her. I could not press for dismissal; but I smelled the shirt again, and felt that some steps must be taken.

"Why not make her go up to the Technical School and learn how to wash?" I said. "Here we are paying enormous rates for the upkeep of the Technical School, and we can't

get a shirt washed properly. It's both absurd and disgraceful."

It appeared that this course had been suggested to Biddy; that she had promised, even pledged herself with oaths, to go to the school and there learn to wash. But she had not gone. Week after week the promises had been renewed. Week after week they had been—broken is a wrong word to use. Biddy Canavan does nothing so decisive and definite as break a promise. Week after week the promise had been neglected. I touched the shirt again, and shivered at the disgusting matted greasiness of it.

"You must put it to her strongly," I said. "Threaten her that you'll dismiss her the next time you find she has not been to the Technical School."

"I wish you would do it yourself," said Ada. "I really cannot do any more."

"You're afraid of her," I said.

"No, I'm not. If she abused me or was impudent, or made any sort of excuse, I should speak to her; but she simply cowers and looks at me with eyes of a spaniel which expects to be beaten."

"Very well," I said. "I'll speak to her myself to-day. That kind of woman must be shaken up for her own good."

I did speak to Biddy Canavan. I spoke as no man ought to speak to a woman, as I have never spoken to a woman before and never intend to speak to one again. She utterly defeated me. Her face expressed a settled, helpless melancholy, and along with that a sort of trustful and affectionate confidence in me. I came to the conclusion that she regarded me as a kind of Providence; that my decisions might seem severe, but would be accepted as just and altogether right without murmuring. She drooped all

over. Her head drooped, her arms drooped. Her attitude reminded me of that particularly contemptible kind of tree called a weeping willow. She had no energy, or she would have fought; no self-respect, or she would have resented what I said. At the end of five minutes I felt inclined to speak more gently. Then I fled from the kitchen. If I had not fled I should have apologised to Biddy Canavan—apologised abjectly, and invited her to come and wash in my house two days every week instead of one. I should very likely have offered to buy more flannel shirts if it were a real pleasure to her to spoil them. I should have done all this, though the fragrance of the abominable garment I was wearing was in my nostrils.

The next day was my birthday. In our household birthdays are always high festivals. We laid gifts on the happy individual's plate at breakfast-time, and we had a large rich cake for tea. When I came downstairs I found the usual number of brown-paper parcels, one from each of the family and one over. I had reckoned on a gift from each of the family. I was puzzled by the extra parcel, which was larger than any of the others, and addressed in a strange handwriting. I took it up and poised it in my hand. It was heavy. I opened it slowly and discovered a cake. It was the kind of cake which is to be seen displayed in the windows of cheaper grocery shops at Christmas time, made, I am told, of margarine and stale eggs—certainly of gritty currants. It had sugar on the top, hard, white sugar; and embedded in the sugar was a highly glazed holly leaf, made of thin cardboard. It must have survived the Christmas trade, lain unnoticed and hidden in some obscure nook, been discovered at a season of spring-cleaning or stock-taking. Pinned on to it was a card,

plainly another survival. It bore the inscription:

"For the Master's birthday, from Biddy Canavan, with kind regards."

"I thought," I said, "that this woman had three starving children. I was told that she had."

I received from the whole family an assurance that the children existed, had been seen in the flesh, and from time to time had been given cast-off garments.

"Then what on earth does she mean by buying a cake like this and giving it to me? Why doesn't she keep it and feed her babies on it? Send it back to her at once."

Then I realised that this course at least was impossible. I had been brutal to Biddy Canavan the day before. I could not be brutal to her again. My words, words which I still maintain were those of perfectly righteous wrath, came back to me, rose up and smote me, burnt into my flesh like hot skewers. I had spoken thus and thus; and Biddy Canavan had spent half a week's income or thereabouts on buying a cake for me.

"What," I asked helplessly, "is to be done with a woman like this? She can't wash and she won't try to. She is utterly inefficient. She can't be helped or improved in any possible way. She's a burden to society, a menace, an actual menace, to the peace of mind of respectable people who wear flannel shirts. And she possesses in the highest degree the distinctive virtues of Christianity. She alone, of all the people I have ever met, turns the other cheek to the smiter and deliberately does good to those who spitefully use her. What am I to do with her and her cake?"

It was suggested that the cake should be kept to the summer holidays. It would not be much staler than it was,

and we should have a schoolboy with us then. Also that I, or someone in my place, should take Biddy Canavan by the hand, lead her up to the portals of the Technical School, push her in and stand beside her, uttering words of encouragement, while she learned to wash.

But our staff did not consist entirely of Mollys and Biddy Canavans. Our prop and stay was an Englishman who served us as gardener, groom, and general superintendent of our affairs. He also acted as a sort of voluntary curate to me, and when he talked about anything done in the parish, such as the holding of a service in church, he always said it was done by "Mr. 'Annay and me." This man, Fred Martin, was my most intimate friend in those days. I met him first when I was curate of Delgany, where he was groom to Sir William Butler. He used to pose on horseback for Lady Butler's cavalry pictures. When he heard that I was leaving Delgany he volunteered to come with me and to serve me in any capacity and for any wages I chose to offer. As long as I remained in Westport, Martin remained my friend, and as soon as the children grew big enough to toddle about, added to his other duties that of day nurse. He used to look after them when everybody else was too busy to pay any attention to them. He even, though he knew nothing whatever about the sea, came out with me occasionally as crew when I couldn't get anyone else, and helped me in racing my boat. He and I were once upset together on a squally day. I knew that Martin could not swim a stroke and wondered how he would take his sudden plunge into deep water. Many men would have been frightened, grabbed at me, and perhaps drowned us both. Martin remained perfectly calm. While we clung to the keel of the overturned boat, he expressed

the only fear he felt, that "Mrs. 'Annay" would be annoyed because the tea-basket had gone to the bottom. He was the sort of man I should like to have beside me in a tight place. He would be invaluable on a desert island, for there were very few things he could not do.

Marketing and catering in our early Westport days were done in a curious way. Most things were brought round to the door by the vendor. Women arrived at all hours of the day who sold fowls, eggs, butter, fish and fuel. The scene was often an odd one when live lobsters crawled about the floor of the hall, while bargains were struck about the prices of them. I remember a man who acted as a kind of amateur butcher, bringing us a young heifer alive. He had already been to two or three other houses and was asking his customers to mark off on the beast the part they would like to buy. When he had the whole animal marked out in this way he proposed to kill it. There was, however, a regular butcher in the town, a woman, who supplied us with most of our meat. The principle on which she conducted her business was peculiar. When an animal was slain, the best joints, such as a sirloin, were allotted to the customers of highest social standing, in strict order of precedence. When Lord Sligo was in residence no one else could get a sirloin. It was regarded as no more than right that he should have the best joints and it was no use anybody ordering it beforehand. When he was not in Westport it was possible for humbler people like ourselves to get a good joint. But anyone much lower down in the social scale than we were, never got a good joint at all. I remember an Englishman who came to live in Westport asking me quite seriously whether the Irish beasts had sirloins. He said he had been

ordering sirloins ever since he had been at Westport and he had never once succeeded in getting one. I told him sympathetically that he never would, unless he could persuade the government to give him a knighthood. It was not a question of paying more or less than other people. All joints, good or poor, cost the same per pound. I think it must have been the Glendenning, whose statue adorned the market-place, who introduced this aristocratic way of doing business. He made a law, so legend said, that all ox-tongues should be reserved for him. In his day no one else, except a guest in his house, ever tasted that dainty.

When I first went to Westport there were three outlying churches, which my curate and I had to serve every Sunday. One lay on the north shore of the bay, about four miles from Westport. It was attended by a few people who were half-fishermen and half-farmers, and by the constantly changing inhabitants of a coast-guard station. Beside that church was a little school attended by about twenty children to whom I used to teach the catechism once a week.

North-east of the town about four miles off, was another part of the parish, where a number of farmers lived. There we had a building, the lower part of which was a school and the upper storey a little church. When I first went there we had no music at all in that church. We possessed no instrument and, even if we had one, there was no one in the place who could play it. After a while I persuaded a daughter of a farmer to take music lessons, which she did with great diligence. When she had learnt sufficiently to be able to play a few hymns we bought a second-hand and rather wheezy harmonium.

South-east of the town was the third of these outlying

churches, a grey block of a building with a squat tower. It stood by itself on the top of a hill. This was, I think, the most desolate place of worship I have ever attended. There were very few people to go to it and the maximum congregation never could exceed fifteen or sixteen. They were most faithful people and almost every one attended church every Sunday. The church itself was heated by means of two open fireplaces which, oddly enough, were set about five feet from the ground, leaving a blank space of wall beneath them. I cannot imagine what was in the mind of the architect who designed this method of heating. It was quite the worst I have ever known. The fuel used was turf, and was supplied in a perfectly simple way. Each member of the congregation brought with him a sod or two of turf and, as he entered the building, he threw his contribution on one or the other of the fires. In certain winds both chimneys smoked and then it was a matter of, "Dimly here we worship thee," for the smoke got so thick that it was quite impossible for me to see the congregation or for the people to see me. Yet Sunday after Sunday this little band of people gathered most faithfully to that church and I cherish a recollection of the piety with which they joined in the early celebration of the Holy Communion which I was able to give them once a month.

The only part of the parish which had not got a church of its own was the south shore of the bay, due west of the town, and from this district some of the people had to come seven miles to church. The amazing thing is that they did it, Sunday after Sunday, in almost any weather. And it must be remembered that when I first went to Westport there were neither motor-cars nor bicycles. After I had

been there about ten years, Mrs. Livingstone of Belclare, whose house stood in that part of the parish, built another little church, very tiny, about five miles from Westport. For some time before that we used to hold an afternoon service in a hayloft above a stable, a little disturbed occasionally by "importunate trampling and neighing" from the stalls below. The church which Mrs. Livingstone built was a little gem. It was designed by Sir Charles Nicholson, who paid a special visit to Westport to study the scenery in the neighbourhood, and the cottages in which the people lived. His idea was to build something which looked as if it belonged to the place. The site was in the Belclare grounds, under the shadow of Croagh Patrick, the sacred mountain from which, according to popular belief, our snakes and toads were cast into the sea. The legend gave Sir Charles the idea of commemorating this useful miracle in the decoration of the church. Along the front panel of the wooden altar rails was a row of snakes fleeing fast before the threatening crozier of St. Patrick. This was done after the medieval fashion in very bright primary colours. In a little graveyard which surrounded the church were buried Mrs. Livingstone's husband and one of her sons who was killed in a hunting accident.

It is easy to see that the work in a parish like that, with five churches to serve, was no light affair, even for two men; and on Sundays one or the other of us had to travel more than twenty miles. At first I used to do this on horseback, but later on, when bicycles were available, I gave up the use of a horse which always caused a certain waste of time that I could ill spare. A horse had to be stabled and got out again. A bicycle could always be leaned against the churchyard wall. Besides, a bicycle

went much faster down hill. At first, good people in the parish were shocked by my riding a bicycle on Sundays. They regarded it as a form of the sin of Sabbath-breaking. They realised that if I was to get round to my parishes I must have some means of transport; but for some reason they regarded a horse as less wicked than a bicycle.

The people who attended these outlying churches were, I think, the most simple-minded and pious people I have ever come across in my life, and there was a beautiful vein of mysticism in their religion. I had a curious experience with one of them, a small farmer, which will dwell in my memory until I die. I was visiting him in his poor little cottage during his last illness. He lay on a bed, a shrunken, feeble figure of a man, with a wrinkled, weather-scarred face, and toil-scarred hands. Over him was a quilt of crazy patchwork, hundreds and hundreds of coloured scraps sewn together, a monument of wonderfully patient toil, made thirty years before by a wife who had died. Her work lived after her, the quilt which covered him, the girl who stood beside the fireplace, at whose birth her mother died, John the first-born, four other girls and Thomas, who stoked the engine of a steamer on the St. Lawrence River. Now "himself," husband, father, widower, lay dying. Outside in the kitchen John sat over a fire and waited, a grizzled, unemotional, strong man of forty-five. I sat by the bedside. Near at hand was a table, standing unsteadily on the pitted, earthen floor. It was spread with a white cloth, and on it were little silver vessels. Across the end of it lay a surplice. The old man was to receive the Sacrament for the last time, the Sacrament of which he had partaken a thousand times before, kneeling at the altar rails in church.

"If it's pleasing to your reverence," he said, "I'd like to say over the Belief along with you, the way we did be saying it at prayers in the church."

I began the Apostles' Creed, and recited it clause by clause. The old man followed me. The girl at the fire-place stood rigidly upright, and her lips moved. She, too, was saying the familiar words. John, in the kitchen, rose from his stool and stood until the voices ceased. There was a silence for a time, and then the old man spoke again.

"Sarah," he said, "let you go out of this and wait along with John until I call for you. There's something I want to say to his reverence."

The girl left the room obediently. The ill-fitting door was closed behind her. The old man watched her go, glanced at the door, and then turning himself with difficulty, leaned across the edge of the bed. He spoke in a whisper.

"There's one thing I'd like to speak to you about," he said. "Are you listening to me?"

"I am surely."

"Well, it's what I wouldn't tell e'er a man only yourself, but I have been meaning to tell you this a long time. It was six weeks ago or maybe more; anyway, it wasn't long before the Christmas. It was the first Sunday I gave up going in to prayers, and I was always a good one to go until I wasn't fit to face the hill on the way home, without sitting down maybe twice to get my breath; and that's what I'd be ashamed to do. John was at prayers, and Sarah along with him, and that's the way I came to be alone by myself in the house. I was sitting by the fire, and I was thinking of the hill beyond there, and the way it did be covered with furze bushes so as a sheep could hardly pick a bit

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behind them. I was going back over the job I had of cleaning it, and terrible work it was getting the roots hoked up. It would have suited me better to have been reading my Bible when I couldn't go in to prayers, but what I'm telling you is the way it was, and that was what was in my mind at the time. All of a sudden there was hands laid on my head from behind like, the way I couldn't see who was there. Nor I didn't try to see, for there was a kind of dread on me knowing well that I was lone in the house. I didn't say a word, and no more did He, only there did be a wonderful content on me. It's what I've never told to e'er a one before, and I wouldn't be telling it to you now, only I'd be easier in my mind if your reverence knew. I could tell by the feel of the hands on me that it was Himself, and that He was pleased, and I'd a right to be content. I was content, too, and I knew that I hadn't long to stay here. I knew that my strength wouldn't come back to me, and that it would have to be John that would make the way across the side of the hill out into the road. But I was content in myself, with the feel of the hands on my head. Tell me this now, your reverence, for it's yourself would know the like if anybody would, was it *Him* that came to me that time?"

"I haven't the least doubt that it was."

"It's wonderful," said the old man. "I was thinking myself that it could only be Him. There's ne'er another only Him would do it, and this the backward kind of place it is, and no way into it off the road, without you'd be climbing fences and walls. It's wonderful. And hadn't I the right to be content when I could tell by the feel of the hands on me that He was pleased; though I wouldn't say that there's much about me to please Him? For it's not

easy for a man to be attending to his religious duties the way he should when he has a family to rear, and herself gone from him with them young, and the like of that hill with the furze bushes on it opposite to the house."

O Sancta Simplicitas!

But if the Lord was near those people, the devil was there, too. There was a girl whom I married to a young farmer; a decent, good fellow, but a heavy drinker. After the marriage things got worse and life was not very happy in that cottage. There was a child born, a little girl. The mother, very young herself, adored the child. Nothing was too good for it. Whenever I went to the house I had to listen to bitter complaints. The husband, so the wife said, spent all their money on whisky, and she could not buy the clothes, the adornments, even the food she wanted for the child. Then, when the child was two years old, the mother became consumptive and lay dying. Every time I went to see her she poured out complaints. The child was starving. She herself was starving. The husband, perpetually drunk, would not give her a penny. These were pitiful tales. Ever since the child was born, I had given her small sums. In the course of her long illness I gave her a good deal, half a crown at a time. At last she died. When the funeral was over, the husband came to see me. He brought a little canvas bag with him, full of half-crowns, which he handed to me, telling me that they were mine. After his wife's death he had found concealed in the mattress on which she lay, £47, all in silver coins. Part of it he knew was mine, and brought it back to me. The rest of the money

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he had given her to buy things for the child. She had never spent a penny of his money or mine. It had all been hoarded, coin by coin, while she made her continual complaints of poverty and begged for help for herself and her starving child. It was Browning's "Gold Hair" over again.

"Hid there? Why? Could the girl be wont
 (She the stainless soul) to treasure up
Money, earth's trash and heaven's affront?
 Had a spider found out the communion-cup,
Was a toad in the christening-font?"

CHAPTER VII

I FOUND myself when I went to Westport plunged into the midst of a society which was entirely strange to me. Lord John Browne took little part in the social life of the place. He lived almost like a hermit in a small house in his brother's demesne, the interior of which always reminded me of a well-kept cabin of a ship. He had been in the navy in early life and I think the habits of tidiness in small places survived in him. He was occasionally visited by his sister, Lady Emily Browne, whom I shall always remember for the sake of the very odd present she sent me from London after one of her visits to Westport—two pounds of green tea. I did not like the stuff, but years afterwards it was very useful to me. I have all my life found it very difficult to keep awake after ten or ten-thirty o'clock. When I began to write *The Seething Pot*, I had to sit up late to do it, for I had no other free time. It was Lady Emily's green tea which kept me awake.

Lord John was looked upon with some awe by everybody in Westport. There was a general feeling that we "knew him to be an austere man." He was certainly no seeker after popularity, and the good he did—there was a great deal of it—was done almost by stealth. But there was another side of his character which I only discovered by degrees—indeed scarcely discovered, rather guessed it.

There was a day—he told me this story himself—when he discovered an aged crone from the town breaking branches off ornamental shrubs in the pleasure grounds of the

demesne. There was no excuse for her. She could have picked up as much firewood as she wanted under the great trees in the part of the demesne open to the public. It must have been some kind of natural malice which set her breaking ornamental shrubs. She was moreover an old offender. Lord John had found her and warned her before. This time, being seriously annoyed, he was determined to put a stop to it. He ordered her to walk in front of him straight up to the police barrack. She obeyed until they came to the gate of the demesne. There she stopped and turned to him. She asked to be allowed to go the rest of the way by herself. She was very old, crippled, extremely dirty and as ugly as any one can be. Lord John himself was over seventy at the time. "Sure where would my character be, your Lordship's honour, if I was to be seen walking the streets alone with a fine young gentleman like yourself?" The idea of an illicit flirtation with the poor creature caught Lord John's fancy. She was pardoned, even, I think, allowed to carry off the branches she had broken.

After he became marquess, Lord John left his cottage and lived in Westport House. Gramophones were at that time new toys and he bought the first which ever came to Westport. I went to tea with him one afternoon and he offered to show off the instrument, which he thought might be useful to me in parish entertainments, and which he was quite willing to lend. His niece, now Lady Sligo, was there, and it was she who wound up the thing and set it going. But it was Lord John who chose the record. In spite of mild protests—not from me—he insisted on a song then popular in music halls about a young lady whose "golden hair was hanging down her back." He greatly

preferred this to anything else and was convinced that both I and the parish would prefer it too. He was quite right about that.

Apart from Lord John Browne, the "society" in the parish consisted chiefly of officials and small landed gentry, very different people from any I had known either in Belfast or Delgany. They struck us as being far less civilised than the people to whom we were accustomed, but perhaps that was only because many of their ways were strange to us. They were very kind and hospitable people and I look back with pleasure to the years I spent among them. It is true that during the later part of our time in Westport relations between us and our upper-class parishioners were strained. But this was my fault, not theirs, and the real friendships survived what must have seemed my irritating perverseness. In every effort which I made for the good of the Church I received warm support, and no people could have been pleasanter to live with. The many kindnesses which we received linger fragrantly in my memory now, though it is twenty years since I said farewell to Westport, and it has never been my good fortune to return there, even for a short visit.

With the farmers, fishermen and others who made no claim to the dubious title of "gentry," my relations were always happy, and I came to have a deep love for the people who were utterly different from any I had known before. Someone once said to me that the real Ireland lies across the Shannon westwards, and that he who only knows Ireland east of Athlone does not know Ireland at all. This, I think, is, or at that time was, very nearly true.

It is difficult for English people, and it was difficult for me coming from the east of Ireland, to realise what the

life of a west of Ireland peasant farmer was. In England a farmer is considered a well-to-do man. He is the owner of considerable property. He lives on a high scale of comfort, employing under him a number of farm labourers. The farmers in the east of Ireland, as in England, were a distinct class, very much better off than the farm labourers and controlling, in later times owning, large tracts of land. In County Mayo large farmers did not exist, though there were men who rented large tracts of land on which they grazed herds of cattle, an occupation which cannot be called farming. Before my time efforts had been made by economists to change the system of west of Ireland farming. It was believed that large-scale farming would be economically preferable to the existing system of cultivation of small plots. My friend, Lord John Browne, a man of advanced and liberal ideas, was responsible for the creation of such large farms as existed in my time. He believed, as many other enlightened men did then, that the farming of the land in tiny patches was uneconomical, bad for the country and even for men engaged in it. Unfortunately, the making of large farms could only be accomplished by evicting numbers of small men from tiny patches of land on which they lived, miserably enough. This reform, if it was a reform, had two evil effects. It produced an enduring bitterness in the hearts of the dispossessed and it crowded people on to such land as was still available, thus creating agricultural slums, which were dealt with afterwards by the Congested District Board. When I first went to Westport the few large farms were described by the people as ranches, a witness to the fact that in popular opinion they were not farms at all. The rest of the land was farmed in tiny patches of twenty or

thirty acres. There were no paid labourers, for the farmers could do all the work themselves. Sometimes these small farmers lived in incredibly bad conditions. I can remember when I visited the house of one of my parishioners for the first time, being shocked to discover that the habitation consisted of one single room. In it lived, sleeping and eating, the farmer and his wife, their grown-up daughter, two cows, a calf, a couple of pigs, a dog and a whole flock of hens which roosted on the rafters of the building. Later on the daughter got married and her husband joined the party in this single-roomed cottage, and in it, ultimately, the girl's first baby was born. All that was changed while I was at Westport, and twenty years later no such habitations existed in the parish. The magic ownership, the result of a series of land purchase acts, wrought the change. A man will always spend money and labour to improve what is his own.

But these small farmers, low as their standard of comfort, had one advantage over the English farm labourer, who is immeasurably better off than they were in food and clothing. They were independent men, not wage-earners; working for themselves, not for a master. And few dwellings were as bad as the one I have described. For the most part the houses consisted of two or three rooms and the livestock lived in sheds, and not under the same roof with the people. The houses were single-storey buildings, whitewashed and thatched. They had large open fireplaces in the living-rooms where a turf fire burnt continually. It was never allowed to go out and at night the smouldering coals were banked up with ashes, ready to be blown into a blaze the next morning when fresh sods were thrown on. Over this fire was always hanging from

a hook a kettle or a pot in which potatoes or food for the pigs boiled. The regular food of the family consisted of potatoes, large home-baked loaves, and bacon, fried or boiled. Fresh meat was rarely eaten, and this was perhaps the reason why rheumatism, that scourge of the English country, was unknown in spite of the constant damp. Scarcely anything was drunk at home except milk or tea which had been brewing for some time. Unless the tea was very strong it was little esteemed and I remember one old woman telling me that she did not care to drink tea unless it "barked the cup," that is to say, left a brown stain round the inside of the cup into which it was poured.

The country children in summer-time went about without shoes or stockings. One of the schools of which I was manager was out in a corner of my parish called Slingan, and except in very bad weather none of the children ever wore shoes or stockings. This made teaching a much easier task than it is in England, for it is surprising how much of the noise that goes on in an ordinary school is made by the children's boots. These Mayo children made no noise at all except with their tongues. The Irish school-day was arranged quite differently from that of the English children. There was no midday break. The children went to school at ten o'clock in the morning and stayed there till three. There were, of course, a couple of short intervals for play, but no child was ever able to go home to dinner. The result was that the children arrived home about half-past three in the afternoon. The father of the family had generally had his dinner, fried bacon and potatoes, earlier in the day. The children used to sit down round the table without plates or knives and forks and, of course, without a tablecloth. Their mother took the pot from the

fire, tipped the potatoes out, making a pile of them on the table. The children then helped themselves from the pile of steaming potatoes and ate them with their fingers. There was generally a heap of salt and sometimes the frying-pan in which their father's bacon had been cooked was laid on the table and the children were allowed to dip their potatoes in the hot grease.

When I first became a school manager the parents were still paying a little for their children's education. The "school pence," as the people called these payments, went to augment the teachers' salaries. Then education was made free. This was supposed to be a great boon, but the immediate result was a drop in the school attendance, the parents arguing, not unfairly, that what cost nothing could not be worth much. Compulsory education had not yet been decreed for Ireland, and even when it became the law, was not enforced in most country places. Yet these boys and girls of ours often did well afterwards in the fiercely competitive world of America.

The habit of going about barefooted was not confined to the children. For the most part the men wore boots, but, oddly enough, the women did not, except when they were going to Westport on market or fair-days, and then they only wore them for the sake of appearance. My rectory stood just outside the town, and a little way above my gate there was a grassy bank. I used to see the women sit down and put on their shoes and stockings before entering the town. For the walk from their own homes they had preferred the freedom of bare feet, and they only pinched up their feet into boots for the sake of appearing respectable. In those days, 1892, and for some time afterwards, the women seldom wore hats or bonnets,

but both old and young covered their heads with a small shawl, folded diagonally so as to make a triangle. The two points opposite the diagonal hung on their necks and the other two points were tied or pinned under their chins. These little shawls, made in various colours, were a very pretty head-dress, much prettier than the cheap hats which women took to wearing afterwards. It was the young women who first discarded their shawls. Their mothers and their grandmothers went on wearing them for a long time. But before I left Westport in 1913 the head-shawls had almost entirely disappeared.

The universal fuel in the cottages was turf or peat. Almost every tenant had a right to turbary, which meant the right to dig turf on some adjacent bog. The turf was dug in the early spring and left in little piles to dry. In the autumn it was brought home in creels on the backs of donkeys, for the bogs were impossible for wheeled traffic. It was then built into ricks outside the cottages and brought in in baskets for household use. People who had their right of turbary on a good bog, where turf was abundant and easy to get at, used to dig more than they wanted for their own use and bring what they could spare into Westport usually on the backs of donkeys to be sold to the town people. The donkey, when rid of its turf, carried his master or mistress home. But whether it was a man or a woman who rode it, the seat was always sideways on the donkey's hind quarters, never cross-legged and never on the part of the beast where the saddle is usually put. Some bogs are much better than others, producing turf of superior quality. The very best came from Achill Island and this was brought round to Westport quay in large boats called hookers. Very good turf

was hard and black like coal. It left a clean white ash and was nearly as lasting a fuel as coal. We came after a time to be keen judges of turf, and could tell at a glance what its value as fuel was.

I had rather a curious experience in Mells years afterwards. In Somerset there is a turf of very inferior quality, dug near Glastonbury, and sometimes brought round for sale. A man turned up one afternoon at my rectory, while Lady Horner was having tea with us. He offered his load for sale. We agreed to divide it between us. But Ada went out to inspect it before we actually bought it. She discovered that it was what she considered a very inferior turf, loose-fibred, brown and of small fuel value. She told the man that she would not dream of buying it. He replied: "I see, Madam, that you know peat when you see it. I'll give the whole of that load to the other lady and bring you a proper load of good turf." He calculated on the fact that Lady Horner, not being Irish, would not know good peat from bad. We declined to take part in this swindle of the innocent. I think in the end we divided the two loads, the good one and the bad, between us.

I have always liked the smell of turf when it was burning. I was accustomed to it as a boy in the north of Ireland, and the smell of it gives a room a homelike feeling for me. But the smell of stale turf-smoke is sour and disagreeable. The atmosphere of our country churches reeked of it, for everybody's clothes were saturated with it. Chimneys in County Mayo cottages do not draw well—if they draw at all. There is always a cloud of smoke floating about the room in which the people live. Oddly enough, this seems to be very wholesome. When the

Congested Districts Board built houses with good chimneys which drew the smoke up from the fire and left the atmosphere of the room clear, the people took to catching all sorts of unaccustomed diseases. A doctor in Galway once explained to me that turf-smoke is a disinfectant in which objectionable germs cannot live. The people in the new houses, coming suddenly into a clear atmosphere in which the germs flourished, caught innumerable diseases. This may be a wrong theory, but the facts on which it was based were as that doctor stated them. In their old cottages the people lived in an atmosphere of turf-smoke, and in their new houses they were living in a clear atmosphere and they certainly caught fresh diseases. This goes to show that even scientific philanthropy sometimes does more harm than good, a truth which most earnest social workers are unwilling to believe.

Many of these Mayo farmers were not desperately poor, being capitalists in a small way. It was always an object with them to save up money for their daughters' dowries. A girl in the west of Ireland had a poor chance of getting married unless she had a dowry. In this way the people were very much more like the French than the English. Prudent fathers were always saving, and a man who was often living very poorly often had fifty or sixty, or eighty pounds in the local bank, sometimes a great deal more. The marriages when I first went to the west of Ireland were usually arranged affairs. A love-match was frowned upon and I have often had it explained to me that such marriages always turn out badly. Marriages were sometimes arranged between young people who scarcely knew each other. I remember marrying one couple who had never seen each other until they met in the church. After

the service was over and we had gone into the vestry to sign the register, the bridegroom gave, or tried to give, the girl a hearty kiss. She resisted, pushing him away from her. The bridegroom turned to me with an aggrieved air. "She ought not to be shy now, your Reverence, ought she?" I do not know whether he expected the words of the marriage service to obliterate the feeling of modesty which makes a girl shrink from being kissed by an entirely strange man.

These marriages were arranged by the parents, generally with the aid of a go-between, but the advice of the clergy was often asked. A young farmer, a friend of mine, once called on me. "I was wishing," he said, "to speak to your Reverence about Biddy D." "Yes," I said. "I hear you are going to marry her." "I might not then," he said, "for they're telling me she has varicose veins in her legs." If she had I couldn't cure them and I could not see what I had to do with the matter. I soon learned. "What I wanted to ask your Reverence," he said, "was this: has she or has she not?" I had to confess utter ignorance of the condition of Biddy's legs. My friend sighed. "That's a pity now," he said. "I thought your Reverence would be sure to know." Could faith in the omniscience of the clergy go further, in days when young women's skirts reached to their ankles?

Of course, the case in which the couples did not meet until the day of the marriage was very rare. It was generally understood that they had at least one interview, in the presence of their parents, during which they took stock of each other, and were free to refuse the marriage if they liked. But love is a great natural force and though it may be driven out with a pitch-fork, it returns again. I remember one really beautiful story of romantic love. There was

a farmer, a friend of mine, who had four daughters. A young man, also a farmer, fell deeply in love with the third daughter, and asked the father for her; that is to say he proposed himself as a suitor for her hand. The father admitted that the young man was perfectly eligible, indeed one whom he would gladly welcome as a son-in-law; but he said that he could not allow his daughters to be married out of their proper order. The young man must take the eldest or none at all. The young man went away very sadly, refusing to marry the girl he did not love. After a time a suitor was found for her and she went off to a home of her own. The young man made a fresh application for the hand of his beloved. Again he was refused; the father declining to let the third daughter marry before the second had found a husband. So the young man had to wait again. And some years passed before the second daughter was married. Then for the third time the young man approached the father and, I am thankful to say, there was no obstacle to his marrying the girl of his choice. I married them, and it is pleasant to record that this marriage, though a love-match, turned out exceedingly well. The only great misfortune in their lives afterwards was the death, under very painful circumstances, of their eldest daughter, a child of six. There was a large tub full of mashed turnips, almost boiling, standing in the corner of the kitchen, ready to be taken out to the pigs. The poor little girl, when her mother's back was turned, climbed into this tub and sat down. She died of the scalds.

I once discussed the philosophy of marriage with a young couple who knew me well enough to speak freely to me. It was an afternoon in the late autumn and we sat together in the gloom over the turf fire which smouldered

on the hearth. There were three of us, or, counting the baby, which did not speak, four. Mrs. Grady, whom I still addressed as Bridgy, because I had known her intimately since she was nine years of age, sat on a low stool in the chimney corner with her right foot on one of the rockers of the cradle. John, who is Bridgy's husband, and, like her, an old friend of mine, sat on a corner of the white deal table and let his legs swing free. He wore a yellow flannel jacket, a bawneen we call it, buttoned right across his chest, a pair of grey corduroy trousers, and marvellously thick boots, heavily coated with clay. He had been digging and had left his work to do the honours of my visit.

I sat between them on a chair fetched from the room within for my special comfort and carefully wiped with Bridgy's apron of sacking before I sat down on it. We talked slowly, disjointedly. Long silences sometimes followed a remark. We spoke when we had anything to say. We were silent when we did not feel inclined to speak. There was no embarrassment about our silences. The clacking of the cradle and the soft hissing of the pot hanging over the fire filled the spaces pleasantly. Bridgy and I did most of the talking, such talking as there was. I do not recollect that John spoke at all until he burst in upon us with a single remark near the end of my visit.

We spoke about Bridgy's old home, the home of her girlhood, and the district round it, which I knew very well. I deplored the fact that none of the young men and maidens in that neighbourhood were getting married.

"You set them a good example, Bridgy," I said; "I can't see why they don't follow it."

She tossed her head, and was full, I could see, of the pride of a woman who has succeeded in getting married.

"There's Susie Mary," I said. "Why don't they get a husband for Susie Mary?"

"I don't see," said Bridgy, "what's to hinder them making a match between her and Jamesy Tynan, Thomas's son. It's a place would suit him well, and there's somebody wanting in it to do the work."

Susie Mary being an only daughter was an heiress. The man who married her would step into a nice little farm of twenty acres or so, and what Bridgy said was true enough. Susie Mary's father is getting old, and the land would be better of a vigorous young man to work on it.

"Do they like each other?" I asked.

"They do not," said Bridgy. "I never seen them speaking, no more than to pass the time of day or the like, when they'd meet one another on the road."

I had a stupid prejudice about marriage, imbibed in my youth, which was spent in a community where other ideas prevailed. I had never been able to get rid of it completely. I still thought that affection ought to play a part in the settling of a marriage. I said so. It was then that John spoke.

"I wouldn't agree with all that, at all," he said. "Them that is fond of each other before doesn't live happy afterwards."

My recollection of the preliminaries of his own marriage were somewhat vague. I looked at Bridgy to see how she would take this remark. He and she were unquestionably getting on well together. Their faces were full of content and peace. I thought she might resent this frank confession of her husband's original lack of feeling for her. She did not. On the contrary, she supported his view strongly,

citing a concrete case, in order, I suppose, to convince me.

"There was Peter Gannon," she said, "that was married to Honor Dempsy, and the life they're leading beyond there this minute would surprise you. It's nothing but fighting and quarrelling from morning till night. Before they were married he did be wonderful great with her. I wasn't in it them times, but John does be often telling me——"

She glanced at her husband and he nodded a sorrowful confirmation.

"Nobody could be greater with her than he was, unless it was herself with him. Up and down they'd be through the fields, and sitting together under walls, and all sorts: him not being able to content himself unless she'd be along with him, and her every bit as bad. Look at them now. They do say," Bridgy's voice sank to a whisper, "that the end of it'll be, that they'll be striking one another."

John nodded solemnly. His assent carried conviction, for he was a near neighbour of the Gannons, and probably knew as much of their affairs as anyone did. Unhappy marriages are very rare among us. So were love-matches. Yet I could not get rid of my prejudice.

Some time ago I had the pleasure of talking to a very clever woman, an Englishwoman who was paying her first visit to Ireland. She had not gone far beyond Dublin, which, as regards the circles in which she moved, is not very Irish. She said she was struck by the fact that Irishmen do not fall in love. I was surprised and was inclined to argue with her. I am now beginning to think that she was right.

Her observations and John Grady's philosophy fit in very well. It may be better in the long run not to start

with the assumption that we are going to live with angels or goddesses; to enter into the long partnership without illusions. John Grady had none; nor, I feel sure, had Bridgy. And if John and Bridgy did not kiss beforehand, they did not quarrel afterwards. "Who can tell what is good for a man," in matters of this kind?

In those days a great deal of spinning was done in the cottages, but the spinning-wheels used were not those which one is accustomed to see in England, in museums or on the stage. They were very large wheels and were turned by a whirl of the hand, instead of being worked with a pedal. The girl who was spinning held her wool in her right hand, gave the wheel a whirl with her left hand and then walked backwards across the kitchen floor, twisting her thread between her fingers. I have often watched girls at this singularly graceful work. One or two of them would card the wool while another spun. After having been spun the wool was rolled up into huge grey balls and hung from the rafters of the room, to mature, I suppose, in the smoke, like a ham. Afterwards it was treated in various ways. Some was knitted into socks which the men of the family wore. Some was woven into blankets, coarse white flannel and occasionally tweed. Out of the flannel the women made what were called bawneens for the men. A bawneen was a kind of sleeved waistcoat, buttoning up the front. Often trousers were made of this flannel, too. The farmers consumed a good deal of their own wool in this way, but much was sold in the markets at Westport. You bought the flannel, or tweed, by a measure called a bandal, which was rather over a yard. If worn by the women the stuff was dyed a deep purple and made into thick petticoats. I cannot remember in my own

parish, but I have often seen in Connemara, which we regarded as a backward place from the point of view of our superior civilisation, the children clad in a single garment made of this yellowy white flannel. Boys and girls were dressed alike in this combination, the upper part of which was a sleeved waistcoat and the lower part a petticoat. Around the waist was a belt and the children wore no other clothes whatever. There was no difference in clothing between boys or girls, so that at a distance it was impossible to tell which was which.

The fishing in Clew Bay was very little developed, perhaps it was not very good, but there were one or two people who made it their business to catch lobsters. These they stored in huge creels sunk in the waters of the sheltered bays opposite the island cottages. The lobster's claws were pegged to prevent them tearing each other to pieces. Steamers came round occasionally and bought the lobsters so stored, for the English markets. I do not know what price the steamer captain paid for them, but when we went out to one of the islands where they were caught and stored, we could get as many as we liked of any size for a shilling each. I have often sailed home in the evening with two or three dozen lobsters writhing about on the floorboards of my boat. Periwinkles were also caught at the times of the spring tides in the summer. I remember one day beyond all others in which I watched the periwinkle catching. I had sailed out to an island called Dorinish and there I lay full stretch on the short grass which covered the top of the island and basked in the June sunshine and the sea breezes. Beyond me, westward, lay the broad Atlantic, quiet, oily, smooth, glowing dully in the heat. The tide was at its ebb, and the low range of rocks and stones covered

with brown seaweed stretched out north and south. From among them came the voices of girls shouting to each other and laughing joyfully. Rising on my elbow I could see them clambering about, slipping on the weed, splashing among the warm pools. Salt water had no terror for bare feet and short petticoats of home-made flannel. Each girl had a tin can with her, in which she put the periwinkles as she picked them. There was a man on shore who bought them from the girls, boiled them in great cauldrons, packed them in hampers, and shipped them by steamer to Liverpool. Then—but I did not care to let my mind wander to the baking streets and stifling by-ways of a great city.

The tide rose slowly; the girls, keeping always to the brink of the water, were pushed back foot by foot towards the island. At last only the most shoreward rocks were left uncovered. On these few shell-fish harbour, and the work of gathering ceased. The girls began to come together. They walked tenderly among the stones with edges too sharp for bare feet. With much shouting and laughter they collected round their boat—a heavy, ungainly craft—and set to work to launch her.

It was time for me to go too. I reached my boat and hoisted my little sail, just in time to see the girls settle down to their oars and pull out into the sound before me. A faint breeze, the summer breeze which follows the sun in fine weather, came from the south-west and bellied out my sail as I drifted clear of the shelter of the island. I slipped swiftly past the blunt-bowed black boat in which the girls sat tugging at heavy oars. Their voices came to me. They were singing together as they rowed. In the bow sat Onny Gavin. I knew her, because she lived in a cabin on an island to which I often went. “A stout lump

of a girl," her mother called her. I guessed her to be twenty years of age. She was brown-eyed, brown-skinned, wonderfully hardy and strong. I had heard that she was to be married in the spring to the son of a neighbour, an old school-mate of hers. He was away in England, looking for work. As I slipped past with my sail boomed out and the slack of the sheet just touching the smooth water, Onny recognised me. She waved to me, and stopped her singing for a moment to shout a greeting.

That day, with its sunshine and sea, was a memory to me six years old, when an evil chance left me with a whole evening to spend by myself in a Lancashire town. The atmosphere of the smoking-room of the hotel stifled me. I wandered out through the streets, not caring greatly where I went. After a time I came to what seemed the principal thoroughfare. It was Saturday evening. Crowds of men and women thronged the footpaths and the roadway. Electric tramcars, crammed with people, forced a way for themselves through the crowds with much ringing of strident gongs. I turned aside from the street into a wide, open space, a sort of market-place. Grimy booths stood in rows with stalls spread out. Men with hoarse voices proclaimed the virtues of horrible-looking messes of tripe, pigs' feet, bananas, cauliflowers, and various other things. One of the stalls was covered with fish, and in a corner of it, surmounted by a green and red label on a stick, was a pile of periwinkles. Beside this stall, gazing at the pile of periwinkles, was a thin, white-faced woman. She had a baby in her arms, a dirty, ill-nourished creature, and a little girl, barely able to toddle, clung to her skirts. I glanced at her, and then looked carefully, for something—I think it was her eyes—seemed familiar to me. She

looked up and met my glance. I saw that she recognised me.

"Onny Gavin," I said.

"Is it yourself, sir?" she cried. "And what brings you here? But sure, it's good to see you, anyway."

"Me? Oh, I'm only spending one night here. But do you live here, Onny? How can you live in a place like this?"

"Didn't you hear that I was married? Well, I am. Tim came home for me the spring after the summer you were with us on Dorinish. We were married on the Tuesday before Lent."

"And are these your children?"

"They are, thanks be to God. Isn't he a fine boy?" She held the baby, the pallid, flabby creature in her arms, towards me that I might admire him. Then she told me about her life. Her husband earned good wages "tending an engine at one of the factories." They lived in three rooms, a sort of flat, at the top of a house let out in tenements. There was fine accommodation in it—water-taps, gas-jets, and the like of such things.

"Do you ever think of your old days, Onny?" I asked. "Do you ever wish you were back?"

"Do I ever wish I was back? No: but do I ever let a day pass without wishing it? There isn't a week but I come out here on Saturday just to look at them." She nodded to the pile of periwinkles on the stall. "And I do be telling the little lady here the way we used to gather them among the rocks at Dorinish. Don't I, Biny?"

She pulled forward the little girl who clung to her petticoats.

"And I do be thinking many a time that I'd like Sabina

here going out with the girls to gather them, the same as I used to. But, sure God is good, and there's fine schooling and learning of every kind for the likes of her in this place when she's big enough."

Onny had a good dress on her and good clothes for the children. She had boots on her feet. I have no doubt that she had better food to eat than she ever got at home. She had control of water-taps and gas-jets, perhaps even of electric light. She travelled in a train to Blackpool now and then. She could go to "the pictures" night after night. The resources of civilisation were at her command. Her children would learn wonderful things in a great board-school. But—does life consist in the abundance of things which we possess? Maybe, in spite of all, "the little lady," Sabina, the pasty-faced daughter of Onny, would be something nearer what God meant a girl to be if she wore a tattered petticoat, learned the ways of the sea, instead of the use of a typewriter, and gathered periwinkles among the rocks at Dorinish.

Again, "who knoweth what is good for a man?" Does what we call progress bring happiness? But why ask such questions? There is no going back, even if old things were certainly best.

And after all advancement in life does not necessarily lead to unhappiness.

It happened that when we were in Chicago Ada found herself in urgent need of a new dress. We went, on someone's recommendation, to an immense "department store." There Ada surveyed frock after frock without hitting on anything she liked. We were about to go away when the head of the department came to the help of the assistant who was serving us. She was a very grand lady, the grandest

I have ever seen anywhere, most exquisitely dressed, with the manner—I would write of a duchess, if it were not that I do not know any duchess and so cannot be sure what their manners are like. This overpowering lady found a dress the kind Ada wanted and made arrangements for certain alterations. Then she turned to me and said: "I'm afraid you don't remember me." I did not see how I could be expected to remember anyone in Chicago to which I was paying my first visit. "I'm Kathleen," she said, "and when I was a child at Carrowholly school—" Then I remembered her, a little bare-footed maiden who waded out into the sea one day after school and found a lobster under a stone and brought it back and presented it to me. Life had dealt kindly with her and I think she was happy. She was the head of a department in a great store. She earned a salary far larger than mine as Rector of Westport. She made periodic journeys to Paris to choose the materials and fashions in which the ladies of Chicago dress themselves. It must be very exhilarating to feel that you can dictate, in all that concerns their clothes, to the ladies of Chicago.

Almost all prices were very low when we first went to Westport. We could buy excellent potatoes at a 1¾d. a stone, and a good goose cost one shilling and sixpence. Chickens were sixpence each, but I am bound to say that they were very lean chickens. A friend of mine, the son of a rather impoverished squire, once made a handsome sum out of chickens. He wanted to go abroad, to British Guiana I think, where he had a job offered him, but he could not raise enough money for the journey. He hit on the idea of advertising these chickens in the English papers, offering them at two and sixpence a pair. This left him with a

handsome profit, even after paying postage. The difficulty was their extreme leanness; but he made an asset out of this drawback by advertising them as "Heather-fed chickens with a flavour of grouse." The amazing thing was that the English not only bought these chickens, but wrote him grateful letters saying that they could distinctly discern the flavour of grouse and liked it greatly. I wanted him to go on with this business, in which there seemed to be a chance of making a fortune. But this he refused to do, though I do not think he suffered from an uncomfortably sensitive conscience. He gave it up when he had enough money to pay his passage abroad. I never heard of anyone taking it up and I suppose it would be too late to begin it again now, for the west of Ireland chickens have improved under the care of the Congested Districts Board. They have probably lost their flavour of grouse, being no longer fed exclusively on the heather. That same heather was a great help to us in various ways. I once sat on a Relief Committee which was trying to deal with one of our recurrent famines. A deputation from Clare Island came to us to tell us about the extreme poverty of the people, hoping to secure a large share of the funds at our disposal. One member of the deputation told us that the people on the island were so poor that they had nothing in the world, except a "few little sheep, so small that the eagles could not find them among the heather." I always liked the thought of these people with their rabbit-like sheep and the hungry eagles searching vainly for them from the skies.

Those Relief Committees were in their way great fun, and did more than anything else, during my years in Westport, to open my eyes to what someone called "The

realities of Irish life." I suppose that the misuse of public money is common everywhere. Even in England, where honesty is cultivated almost to excess, I have heard of some queer things done with public money. In Ireland we were almost without conscience. We were all poor, and every now and then got poorer, when some crop or other, generally potatoes, failed us. Then there was an outcry about a famine, and the Government—the detested English Government—was expected to come to our assistance. Sometimes an embittered Chief Secretary refused the help we demanded. Once at least his hardness of heart had its reward. The people of a certain district in County Mayo appealed to him for seed potatoes, saying that driven to despair by starvation they had eaten all their seed potatoes, on which depended their next year's crop. It was made plain that unless they were given seed potatoes they could not possibly survive. The Chief Secretary, I do not remember which Chief Secretary it was, was obstinate and refused to send a single potato—a very unusual course for a Chief Secretary to take. He received a telegram (and this was his reward) from someone in authority in the neighbourhood; "Either send potatoes or coffins at once." There was no refusing an appeal of that kind and it was the potatoes, not the coffins, which were sent. It seemed to me, as no doubt it did to the Chief Secretary, that the people who devised the telegram deserved something.

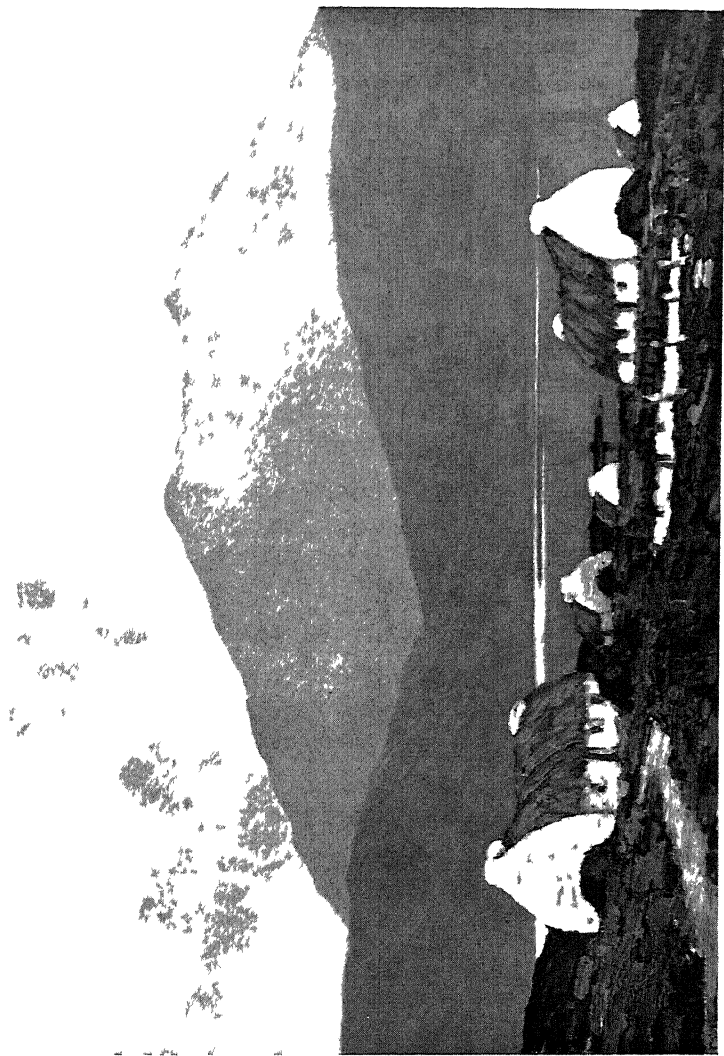
All Relief Committees were run on much the same plan. They consisted of the Roman Catholic Priest and the Church of Ireland Rector of the Parish (to show that there was no religious intolerance, which was supposed to be an important point to emphasise) and a few members of Boards of Guardians and such bodies, most of them

with axes of their own to grind. This meant that the parish priest and I had to do the work, searching out those who most required relief. The other members of the committee were often rather worse than useless. I remember a time when a member of the committee came to me secretly after dark. He informed me that So-and-so, Tom G. or somebody else, was going to apply for relief the next day and certainly ought not to be granted it. He went on to give a full, accurate account of Tom's financial position, telling me how many cows and sheep Tom owned and what money he had on deposit at the bank. He argued that a man as well off as Tom ought not to draw on public relief funds. The next day, when the committee met, Tom's case was brought up, and the most heart-rending appeal was made on his behalf by the very man who had come to me the night before. In this public or semi-public speech we got an account of Tom's position, which showed that neither he, his wife nor his children could possibly continue to live unless they had the assistance asked for. The parish priest had been given the same information before the meeting as I had. It was up to him and me to turn down Tom's appeal. We did so, firmly. Then our informant, Tom's most ardent supporter, said that nothing except his respect for the Church had stopped him from fighting it out on Tom's behalf and defeating us. Next morning he came to me—and no doubt to the parish priest—to say how thankful he was that a firm stand had been made against Tom's outrageous demand.

Then there were the people who tried to exploit the funds we administered for their own benefit. I remember a man who worried us for weeks to buy knitting machines, which he said would solve the whole difficulty of the west

of Ireland poverty, by providing profitable work for the people to do in their own homes. He was a travelling agent for the firm which made the machines and a most persistent man. We had immense difficulty in getting rid of him. There were many more like him, all feeling that if there was money going they ought to have a share of it.

There was an occasion of which a hooker was upset while sailing into Westport Bay and a number of people were drowned. She was carrying a load of young men and young women from Achill Island to Westport, where they intended to catch the steamer for Liverpool. They were going over there, as a great many others did in those days, for the harvest work in Lancashire, intending to return home in the autumn. It was a serious disaster and occasioned a great grief in Achill. I happened to be on the island when the news of the disaster came. I have never seen anything more pitiful than the crowds of old people wailing round the doors of the telegraph office when the names of the young people who were drowned came through from Westport. The deaths also caused a great loss of money, for many families calculated on living for the winter on what these young men and women brought home from the English harvesting. The people of Liverpool subscribed a handsome sum for the relief of this distress and sent over two worthy gentlemen to distribute the money. We met them at the railway station, with bands, all of us wearing silk hats. We were ready to tell them exactly what to do with the money. They were willing to believe anything we told them. But, being Englishmen, they were fettered by a sense of duty. They insisted on going to Achill themselves, before they parted with a penny. They were met when they reached the island by



CONNIE MARY FROM A PICTURE BY PAUL HENRY

rows and rows of people, old and young, all with their arms in slings, leaning on crutches, their heads bandaged up, as befitted victims of the disaster. The hearts of the Englishmen, good simple people, were profoundly touched, and the administration of that fund was the worst I have ever known.

During my twenty-one years in Westport famines became rarer, and there was not so many appeals to public charity funds. I think the people really became much better off than they had been. This was partly owing to the operations of the Land Acts, especially to those who helped land purchase, and partly to the working out of the policy of Mr. A. J. Balfour (Lord Balfour), the one Chief Secretary who was really successful in dealing with Ireland.

But if we missed a source of gaiety when we no longer had to distribute charity funds, we were not altogether left without amusement in the conduct of public affairs. The passing of the Old Age Pensions Act produced in the west of Ireland an amazing situation. The compulsory registration of births, which had operated in England for over seventy years, had not come into force in Ireland until much later. The result of this was that there was no way of determining the exact age of the claimants to the Old Age Pensions. Committees were established in every parish and the plan was that applicants for pensions made the best case they could for themselves, offering many curious proofs of their age. A favourite statement was that the applicant distinctly remembered the "Great Wind," a storm which swept over the country in 1837. This tempest desolated the west of Ireland and traditions of its violence lasted a long time. But there were very few people alive at the time of the Old Age Pensions Act who

could possibly remember it. At the same time, if a memory of that storm was genuine, it was taken as proof of age. Unfortunately, as soon as this landmark became known, every claimant said how he remembered the catastrophe, and all sorts of details were produced for our benefit. We finally became profoundly sceptical about the great wind and refused to accept even the most original anecdotes about it. When we got rid of the great wind, proofs of age became much more varied. There was one woman who approached the committee with the following statement: "I was the mother of thirteen and the youngest of them was a girl, and she has twelve children of her own and the youngest of them is walking. Now am I seventy years of age or am I not?" The committee at once set to work with scraps of paper and pencils to do sums. Unless there was a series of triplets or twins in both families, the woman could scarcely have been less than seventy years of age. At all events, we thought that she deserved the Old Age Pension, whatever age she was, and I am glad to say she got it. There was a man—this case did not come before our committee—who secured the Old Age Pension, although everybody knew that he was not more than sixty. When asked how he managed to deceive the committee which examined him, he replied: "Sure I didn't appear before them at all. I had down an old alibi from the mountains and it was him that appeared." There was another man who came to us asserting that his age was seventy-one. After prolonged and very troublesome investigations we discovered that he was eighty-three. We asked him why he deceived us in this way, since he would have been much surer of the Old Age Pension if he had stated at once what his right age was, instead of understating it as he did. His

reply was: "Sure I knew that I was eighty-three, but I had made up my mind to get married as soon as I had the Old Age Pension, and if I had said I was eighty-three there wouldn't have been a girl in the place that would have looked at me."

There was a garrulous widow whose case I took up single-handed. She was a friend of mine and I wanted to prepare her statement for the committee. We began with the date of her marriage, which took place in 1870. The register declared her to have been twenty-five when the happy event occurred. That seemed to have put her out of court at once. I told her so. But she had an explanation to offer. It appeared that for some reasons which are supposed to influence many ladies, she had understated her age on her wedding-day. She was, she knew, far more than twenty-five, but she did not know how much more.

"The Gods are just, and of our pleasant vices (vanities) make instruments to scourge us." But I also wanted to be just, and it seemed to me a pity that a piece of youthful vanity should deprive my friend of the bounty of the State. I set to work to get back to the years that were lost. This is good scriptural authority, in one of the minor prophets, for restoring the years which the locust and the palmer worm have eaten. I figured rapidly on a piece of paper, and found that if she was to get a pension she must have been thirty-two at the time of her marriage. There was a discrepancy of seven years.

"It was ten years or more," she said, "that I was house-maid in the big house beyond, and before that I was attending on Lady Louisa for a bit."

"How long was the bit? Was it five years?"

"It might. She was a high-up lady, and I mind well that

one thing I had to do was to carry water up for a bath for her every morning, and it was the first time that I ever saw the like of that."

I ought to have got a date out of that, but I am not well up in the history of manners. Would a morning bath be a striking fact, a curious eccentricity in 1855? Unfortunately, I did not know.

"There was one day," she went on in a tone of a person recounting an interesting reminiscence, "that I thought I'd try it myself the way I'd know what it was she did it for. I'd no sense in those days."

Here was another pointer. There must, I suppose, be a fixed age, at all events two fixed dates between which a woman comes to have sense. I missed my chance because, forgetful of the business in hand, I got interested in the experiment with the bath.

"Well," I said, "and how did you like it?"

"There came a weakness over me," she said, "as if it might be when a body would be like to faint. It was as much as ever I could do to get out of it again. It's a queer thing now that a lady would do it every morning, and her just after getting out of bed."

The subject was a curious one. I rather wondered whether Lady Louisa was a pioneer, or whether my friend was abnormally ignorant of the ways of "high-up ladies." I dropped it again and figured. Ten years at the big house got us back to 1860. "The good long bit" spent in carrying water for Lady Louisa might be as much as four years. So we arrived at 1856.

"Before that," she said, "I was up with the doctor's lady. I went to her when I finished my schooling."

"She didn't take baths?"

"She did not. Cock the like of that one up with a bath! It was to better myself that I left her and went to Lady Louisa."

"How long were you with the doctor's wife?"

"A goodish bit."

"As long as you were with Lady Louisa?"

"Well, I don't know. It might be, or longer maybe. Sure it's a great time ago."

"How old were you when you left school?" I asked desperately.

"I got good schooling," she said. "Better nor what's going now, by all I hear, and I was kept to it regular."

"But what age were you when you left school?"

"I couldn't rightly say that, but I was a good lump of a girl when I went to the doctor's wife, and before that I did be in and out of the rectory, helping with whatever there might be to do."

I prepared a statement for the committee, and it was unanimous in granting her the pension, but whether she was seventy years old or not, neither they nor I ever knew.

But this question of age was not our only difficulty. We also had to determine the means, that is to say the income of the applicant, for no one could be given a pension who had more than ten shillings a week. This is a simple matter in a country where people earn wages, but in the west of Ireland at that time very few people were in receipt of any regular wage. The people were living on what they could make out of small patches of land and very largely on the product of the land. Scarcely any money passed through their hands during the year at all. I can remember many long and quite hopeless wrangles on this subject of income.

I happened to be chairman of our committee on the day when Antony Flanagan appeared before us. He was what in Mayo is called a farmer. He paid a rent of three pounds ten shillings a year for a scrap of land, out of which he managed somehow to dig a living for himself and his wife. The form on which a pension was claimed lay before us on the table.

"Will the pensions be put on the rates?" he asked—an important point, for he paid rates.

"They will not, not a penny of them. I defy them to stick the Old Age Pension on the rates, though I don't deny that they'd like to do it if they could."

"What," I said, dipping my pen in the ink, "is the amount of money you have coming in to you every week?"

"I haven't anything coming in to me," he said. "I wish to God I had."

"What do you make out of your farm?"

"I make my living out of it," he said, "and since the boys went to America it's badly able I am to do the same."

"Would you say now that the land was as good as ten shillings a week to you?"

"Didn't you tell me this minute," he said, "that the pension wasn't to be put on the land?"

"I did tell you that, and I meant it. But it had nothing to do with the amount you earn out of your land. What stock have you?"

"I have a cow and two polly bullocks and the old ass."

There ensued a series of intricate calculations about the price the bullocks might or might not fetch at the November fair; the quantity of potatoes consumed by the old man and his wife in the year, leaving out of the count for the time the small potatoes which were given to the

pigs, and the average price of potatoes in the market. After a short excursion into the value and theological orthodoxy of the practice of spraying potatoes, we made a desperate effort to arrive at the weekly earnings of the hens which "herself" kept. It appeared that they laid most eggs in spring, "the very time that eggs do be cheap," and no eggs in winter when eggs fetched a reasonable price.

We kept on dividing sums of money with odd pence at the end of them by fifty-two, with a view to reducing them to weekly earnings. We arrived at fractions so minute that I found it necessary to work with decimals.

"I'm thinking," said Antony at last, "that a man would need to be a schoolmaster to get one of them pensions."

Arithmetic always tries my temper, and I am afraid I answered shortly: "Don't be trying to make jokes over a matter of this kind. Go on telling me about the price of bullocks and pigs, and I'll do the best I can for you."

"If so be that there's plenty of buyers at the November fair, with no great supply of pollies from the mountainy men beyond, I might get eight pounds for one of them and half a crown back out of that for luck."

"That'll be seven pounds seventeen shillings and six-pence. And what will you get for the other?"

"I'm not thinking of selling the other," he said.

I made an effort to add up my column of decimals, and arrived at the conclusion that my friend and his wife were living on 4.3752d. per week, which was clearly absurd.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," I said. "I'll put down 'nil' as answer to that question."

"Will that get me the pension?"

"It will," I said, "if the Inland Revenue officer believes it."

"What would hinder him from believing it? Faith, it would be a queer thing if the like of him was to go contradicting what your honour is pleased to write. Believe it! I'd like to catch him not believing it! It would be as much as his place is worth him."

I was not sure of that, though Antony's claim to a pension was admitted. In all probability the Inland Revenue officer simply shrank from the task of estimating the weekly income of a farmer with six acres of boggy land, who does not handle ten pounds of actual cash in the course of a year. I imagine that the people who drew up the pension claims forms were more familiar with the conditions of life in industrial Lancashire than in western Connaught. I remember one woman whom we knew to be quite well off, but who insisted that she had no income at all. Her plea was that she was living entirely on the credit granted her by complaisant shopkeepers. This was obviously untrue, but the woman made statement after statement about the amount of her debts and her inability to pay them, since she had no resources of any kind. She prefaced each statement with a kind of oath, "In the name of Almighty God," and then solemnly placed her hand on the Minute Book of the committee, which was lying on the table. After we had listened to this kind of thing for about twenty minutes, one member of the committee turned to her and said: "Arra, woman, will you leave the name of Almighty God alone for one minute and tell the truth." Of course these difficulties only lasted for a few years, for as we came to the time when the compulsory registration of births had commenced to operate, the question of age was easily settled. We also devised a formula which determined the income of people who lived on

small patches of land and had very little money. But while the trouble lasted we got a great deal of amusement out of it.

It does not seem to me now that the English are getting half as much fun out of their Means Test as we got out of ours. They appear to get angry about it, a very stupid thing to do. Public business ought never to be taken seriously. It is always comic and should be treated as a joke.

CHAPTER VIII

ALL through our earliest years at Westport we were working steadily at our theological reading. Every evening we used to sit down after dinner with our books and a German dictionary. It was painfully slow work. I got on a little better with the early Greek fathers, for which I used the great Migne edition. I had translations of some of the works of the Greek fathers in the Ante-Nicene Library, the whole of which was bequeathed to me by my father; but a great deal of what I wanted was not in the library at all. The *Apophthegmata Patrum*, for instance, was only to be obtained in the Migne edition. This is a collection of the sayings of the very early Egyptian hermits; and in our pursuit of the spirit of these men, the founders of Christian Monasticism, it was necessary for us to get at what they actually taught. For the same reason we studied Cassian's *Conferences*. The value of these volumes was pointed out to us by German writers such as Zöckler and Harnack. We were struck by the fact that extraordinary little was written in English on the subject. Scarcely any English writer seemed to be interested in those early hermits, and I could find little attempt at understanding them except in the works of Dom Cuthbert Butler, O.S.B., afterwards Abbot of Downside. There was also one interesting sermon by Dr. Paget, then Bishop of Oxford, in which the subject of *Accidie* was treated with much sympathy and understanding. *Accidie* or *akedia* was one of the seven deadly sins listed by the monks. It is not an obvious sin, like

gluttony or avarice, but a kind of apathy. The hermits living their solitary lives were peculiarly subject to this spiritual torpor. But I think it besets a good many other people, especially some of the more isolated country clergy, even in our time. The hermits recognised it as the Psalmist's "Pestilence that walketh at noonday."

The worst of this kind of work is that the student is continually being switched off on to side-tracks. Our main object when we started was to satisfy ourselves as to whether there should be, or should not be, two distinct kinds of Christian life, a higher and a lower. I was, as I have already mentioned, started on this line of thought by pietistic booklets of Bishop Moule. I was inevitably pushed back to the beginnings of Christian Monasticism in pursuit of an answer to the question which troubled me. But I was perpetually going off on side-lines and the seven deadly sins was one of them. I traced these sins right down through medieval times. Much later, when I had given up this line of study, I made some use of the knowledge which I gathered in this way in my novel-writing. There was, for instance, a doggerel hexameter which ran:

"Aeternam vitam si vis, saligia vita."

I represented in one of my stories a Greek bishop—I rather think he was an archbishop—using this hexameter as a clue to the place in which he had hidden some treasure. In another of my stories, *Bindon Parva*, I made use of our ancestors' habit of depicting the seven deadly sins under the form of animals on the walls of their churches. One advantage of novel-writing is that almost any kind of knowledge will turn out to be useful sooner or later.

There were various other side-tracks along which I was enticed, but in the main I stuck pretty steadily to my real subject, the discovery of the line of thought of the men who had adopted the monastic life and how their views differed from those of ordinary Christians who remained in the world. I have said that there was very little written on the subject of those early hermits in the English language, but I owed great gratitude to Dom Cuthbert Butler for his edition of Paladius' Lausiac history and for the many letters which he was good enough to write to me during the course of my studies. This was all the more kind of him, for he was a scholar of European reputation, whereas I was not a scholar at all. I had no training in this kind of work. I was completely isolated, living so far even from my own university that I could scarcely ever make use of its library, and I was quite out of touch with men who were doing scholarly work. I blundered, of course, as any amateur must blunder in this kind of work, and I must have wasted an enormous amount of time, but I did worry through in the end, and I satisfied myself that the Catholic Doctrine of Counsels and Precepts was the solution of my difficulty. This was what I wanted, and when I got it to the satisfaction of my own mind, I began to lose interest in the line of study at which I had worked so hard. But it seemed a pity that the result of all the work we had done should remain only in our own minds, especially when so little literature existed on the subject in English. Ada, who was my fellow student all along, agreed with me that we should offer our knowledge, such as it was, to Dublin University as a possible subject for the Donnellan lectures. Roughly speaking, these lectures at that time—there has been a drastic change since

—corresponded to the Bampton lectures at Oxford. Six lectures, which more or less took the form of sermons, were given at the College Chapel every year, two each term, delivered on two consecutive Sundays. The endowment provided for a certain payment for these lectures and a further payment if they were ultimately published. We determined to offer our hermits to the college under the title of *The Spirit and Origin of Christian Monasticism*. I wrote to Dr. Gywnn, then Regius Professor Divinity, about the project and he encouraged me. Then I submitted the required synopsis and awaited results.

Meanwhile, so deep was the impression made on my mind by those early hermits that I wished sincerely to follow their mode of life. I do not mean to suggest that I was tempted then, or at any other time of my life, to join the Roman Catholic Church. That never was a temptation of mine. I suppose that I had seen too much of the practical working of the system in Ireland. What I wanted was to follow the example of men like St. Anthony, who heard the call: "Go sell all thou hast and come and follow me." For a married man who had already three children and owed something to his wife, it was impossible for me to do as St. Anthony did. I had to support those who were dependent on me and my wife, who had given her whole life to me. But there came to me just what seemed like a call to go to Tristan da Cunha. There was an appeal in the Church papers for a priest to go out to that lonely island there to act as chaplain, schoolmaster, and generally to guide and befriend the poor and isolated people of that island. This seemed to me exactly the kind of thing I wanted. It was from my point of view a literal giving up of all. At the same time I could take my wife

and children with me and at all events secure some food for them to eat and a shelter for their heads. We talked this project over together, for a long time. There was something in the idea of so great an adventure which appealed to us, apart altogether from the feeling of a Divine call. Our lives were so planned for us that we never were able to "go adventuring," though we always wanted to. I still read, wistfully, the books of those braver and more fortunate than I, who cast all prudence to the winds and went forth to "follow fortune, riding post." But, in spite of the desire for adventure, Ada never wanted to go to Tristan da Cunha. She foresaw the difficulties of the enterprise more plainly than I did, and she dreaded the result of such exile on the future of her children. It is to her eternal glory that she agreed to go with me. Her sacrifice would have been greater than mine. There must be very few women in the world who would agree to such a thing, even for the sake of a beloved husband.

In the end we agreed to leave the matter in the hands of God. Perhaps this was a form of superstition, something analogous to the *sortes biblicæ* which used to be practised long ago. We settled that if Dublin University accepted my offer and appointed me Donnellan lecturer, we were to take it as a sign that God wanted my work, such as it was, at home, and that I was not called upon to offer to go to Tristan da Cunha. If, on the other hand, the University turned down my offer and appointed someone else Donnellan lecturer for the coming year, we made up our minds that this was a sign that I was really to offer myself for the work at Tristan da Cunha. We waited. Often in life it has been my lot to wait for decisions over which I had no control, but never, I think, with such

anxiety as then. I remember very well the Sunday morning—there was a postal delivery on Sunday in those days—when a post-card arrived from Dr. Gwynn telling me that the Board had decided to appoint me as Donnellan lecturer. The formal notification of the appointment followed. It was Dr. Gwynn's post-card which made the first announcement, and it arrived on Sunday morning which happened to be the thirteenth day of the month; so that I have come to look forward to these days with some dread. But this is only another example of the superstition from which few men entirely escape.

Our minds were then easy and we put the idea of going to Tristan da Cunha completely out of our thoughts. We set to work to prepare the six lectures which I had to give. As far as I could I kept steadily before me the idea of interpreting the spirit of the great call to Monasticism.

It was during the time when those lectures were being delivered that I renewed my acquaintance and deepened my friendship for Dr. Salmon, who was then Provost of Trinity College. He used to ask me to stay with him during the time of the delivery of my lectures. I was better able then, than I had been when an undergraduate, to appreciate the greatness of this man's mind and the extreme vigour and straightforwardness of his thought. One thing which drew us together was our delight in the novels of Sir Walter Scott. All the time I was working at my Monasticism, the reading of Scott was my recreation and delight. Indeed I think his books were almost my only reading outside of my special work those five years. I found that Salmon was just as fond of Scott as I was.

On Sundays I delivered my lectures and I am sure bored the unfortunate students who had to listen to them. I am

afraid that I also bored a good many of the Fellows, but they, after all, need not have attended College Chapel unless they liked. The students had no choice about the matter. When all the lectures had been delivered, there came the question of securing publication for them. I had only once before published anything, a little book of memoirs of the life of my father-in-law, Bishop Wynne. There was no difficulty about its publication, for Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton accepted it at once on the strength of his name and reputation. But my Donnellan lectures were a different business. They were the work of a man who had no University reputation, not even a first-class degree. Their subject would not interest the general public and even theologians were not likely to pay much attention to it. Dr. Bernard, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, helped me to get the book published. He gave me a letter of introduction to the Macmillan firm, who read my manuscript and turned it down at once. He gave me other letters of introduction and I cannot remember how many publishers refused the book. In the end Methuen took it and that was the beginning of a connection with that firm which has gone on ever since.

I do not know that the publication of my Donnellan lectures brought me very much reputation. It certainly brought me nothing in the way of money. I fancy that Methuen lost something by the venture. It is just possible that there would have been enough copies sold to pay the cost of publication, if it had not been that five hundred copies or so were burnt in a fire at the publishers' office. Not unnaturally, Methuen declined to reprint the book, being, I daresay, glad to be rid of a mass of unsaleable stock. The book was very favourably reviewed by several German

theological papers, although little or no notice was taken of it in this country. It had, however, one good result. It brought me a letter from Dr. Gore, who was then Bishop of Oxford, in which he invited me to pay him a visit. I have ever since been sorry that I did not accept his invitation; but at that time it was very difficult for me to get away from my parish. Indeed this difficulty has afflicted me all through life and has been the cause of my refusing many agreeable invitations. But in those days I was also so poor that the cost of a journey from Westport to Oxford was almost prohibitive. We were quite happy; but we could only just manage to struggle along on our income and for at least five years we never had a holiday.

I was still very much interested in my hermits and I published another little book about them. This was a kind of anthology of their sayings and I called it *The Wisdom of the Desert*. I think I spoilt any chance this little book had of winning attention, by dividing it into chapters and writing a little preface of my own to each chapter. A few years ago I re-read some of these prefaces and found them extremely poor stuff, although I liked them well enough when I was writing them. One of them I used quite recently as the substance of an address given to a provincial Rotary Club—another instance of the way any knowledge comes in useful, if you keep it stored away long enough. The Rotarian spirit seems remote enough from that of the Egyptian St. Antony, though he is—why?—the patron saint of grocers.

But my interest was beginning to wander from my hermits. I had satisfied myself about the question which had worried me ever since I was ordained, and I saw that God did not mean me to live that higher life. I no longer

wished to pursue the various lines of thought which suggested themselves. But having started this kind of writing it was not very easy to stop. I was asked to contribute articles on various subjects to Hastings Dictionaries which were then appearing. I actually wrote a few, but I backed out of the others which I rashly undertook. Among those I did not write were some on Christian Marriage and kindred subjects. I once got a post-card from the editor urging me on. "There is no hurry about Marriage," he wrote, "but please get Adultery done at once." The dictionary was appearing in parts, arranged alphabetically. Hence the hurry for Adultery; but the post-card at the time struck me as being very nearly libellous. It was soon after the publication of my *Wisdom of the Desert* that my thoughts turned to novel-writing. Our decision, made right back in the Delgany days, not to devote time and energy to writing fiction was now revised. It seemed plain to us that the Church had no particular use for our services except as the rector of an unimportant country parish. My work in Westport was growing less and less every year owing to the diminution of the population. It no longer occupied my full energies. Moreover, we were faced once more with a serious financial crisis. We had managed to struggle along pretty well on a small income as long as our children were young, but when it became necessary to send our eldest boy to school we found that we had not enough money to give him the kind of education we wanted for him. We cut down our expenses in every conceivable way. Even my beloved Martin had to be dismissed, though he still came to us for two days a week. Ada tried to run a largish house and take charge of our two baby girls with no more help than that

of one inefficient maid. She acted as housemaid, cook and nurse. I did the work of handyman and gardener. But even so we found it impossible to pay school fees and the travelling expenses necessary to give my son Robert a good education. We once more thought of writing as a means of earning a little extra money.

Although my days were pretty well occupied I had my evenings, once devoted to the reading of German theology, fairly free. I sat down evening after evening to the task of writing *The Seething Pot*. I used to work in my study with Ada sitting beside me sewing. Sometimes the sound of one of the babies crying called her away and disturbed me, for the child had to be brought into the study to be pacified. There were no telephones in those days, so we escaped that distraction; but two babies are at least equal to one telephone. At a fixed hour every evening we stopped and cooked a simple meal over the turf fire. Then I went to work again. I used to read out almost page by page everything I wrote, and Ada, who had a good critical faculty, made me alter a great deal.

At last we got the book finished. So limited was our knowledge of literary affairs that we did not think of getting the thing typed. Indeed I do not think we could have afforded to pay for the typing. I heard by some chance the name of Mr. A. P. Watt and was told that he acted as agent for authors, arranging for the publication of their books. I sent off my ill-written manuscript to him. It was untidy, full of corrections and often nearly illegible. But Mr. Watt read it and made up his mind that it was worth while to try and find a publisher for it. It is to him that I owe, not only the publication of that book, but that I ever wrote another book. Eleven publishers refused

my *Seething Pot* and, left to myself, I should have given up trying after the third or fourth rejection. Mr. Watt persevered and at long last found a publisher, Mr. Edward Arnold, who gave me exceedingly bad terms, the very worst I have ever heard of, even for a beginner. But the book was published and in due course achieved a certain *succès d'estime*. I think the book owed its recognition to a review in the *Spectator* which I have always believed was written by Mr. Charles Graves. If he did write that review I owe him deep gratitude. The success, such as it was, encouraged me to go on writing. I did not make much money out of *The Seething Pot*, but in those days I was content with very little. I set before myself the earning of a hundred pounds a year as the height of my ambition. This sum would have made the difference between being able to keep Robert at school and having to take him away. Before my third novel was published I was making that hundred. I remember Mr. Watt patting my shoulder in encouragement and telling me that if I went on I should make ten times as much. His prophecy was fulfilled; though I have never been what is called a "best seller" or written a "boom" book.

The publication of *The Seething Pot* brought me a great deal more than reputation and a little money. It opened to me the doors of such literary society as existed in Ireland. I renewed my old acquaintance with T. W. Rolleston. I made friends with Standish O'Grady, the father of all who wrote in Ireland at that time. I met and made friends with George Russell, the poet "A. E." But my chief gain, far exceeding all the rest, was that I met and learned to love that noblest of all Irishmen of our time, Sir Horace Plunkett. He invited me to spend a few

days with him in a little house in which he then lived at Foxrock. I at once learned to admire and love Horace Plunkett. He was a great gentleman and a great patriot. He worked for the good of his country without expectation of any earthly reward. Except the devotion of a small band of friends he received none. Our friendship ripened almost at once and his invitations came to include Ada. At his house we met numbers of interesting and distinguished people, both Irish and English. Later on, when his long-planned house was finished, we were constantly there and I look back on those days as some of the most stimulating and delightful of my life. All this was a new kind of life to us, quite different from that spent among peasants and minor squires of western Ireland. I have no claims to belong to the intellectual aristocracy either of my own country or any other, but I do remember that Ada and I, when we entered this new society, had the sensation that we were coming to dwell in places which for us had the atmosphere of home. We were no longer strangers to the life around us, as we were in Westport, good and kind as the friends were whom we made there.

All this might very well have made me conceited. It was a fortunate accident which saved me from that degrading vice. At first hardly anyone would believe that I had written the book. It was published, as all my novels have been, under a pseudonym, but that disguise did not avail long. My name came to be generally known, but most people refused to believe that I had written the book. Having met me they made up their minds that I was much too dull a man to have written *The Seething Pot*. Ada, on the other hand, struck strangers as intelligent. The general

belief was that she had written the book and, out of wifely loyalty, I suppose, allowed me to take the credit. This annoyed her very much.

I have often been asked how and why I chose "George A. Birmingham" for my pseudonym. The "Birmingham" part of it had nothing whatever to do with the city of Joseph Chamberlain and John Shorthouse. I chose it because it was a common name in County Mayo among educated, middle-class people. I knew that the book, if ever read at all, would be traced to County Mayo and I wanted an ordinary local name. The "George" came because I knew no "Birmingham" with that Christian name. The "A" I added for the sake of euphony.

But this change in our lives was not the only result of the moderate success of my *Seething Pot* and the books which followed it. There were other consequences of these writings which were not so pleasant. The Roman Catholic priest in Westport, a man with whom I had hitherto been on friendly terms, conceived the idea that I had caricatured him in *The Seething Pot*. This charge might have been brought against me quite justly by George Moore or by Standish O'Grady; for that first novel of mine was a *roman à clef*. But it was certainly not true that I had that priest in mind when I wrote. The book was written, though not published, a year or more before he came to Westport, and therefore before I knew him. He was extremely bitter about my supposed caricature. I had, so he thought, represented him as something less than a gentleman and this was my real offence. I might have called him a thief or an atheist and he would have minded it much less. It is an odd fact, but men resent a slight on their gentility more than anything else that can be

done to them; unless of course they happen to be gentlemen. Then they do not mind. This priest, in his fury, stirred up the people of Westport against me. He used to write weekly articles in the local papers with such headings as, "The Author of *The Seething Pot* Unveiled." The people, convinced that they ought to rise in defence of their faith, used to gather outside my house at night and boo at me. They burnt me in effigy in the streets. They made an attempt, only moderately successful, to boycott me, all in the hope of demonstrating to an uninterested world that this priest had the table manners of a gentleman. It was an amazingly silly business, though only mildly amusing at the time.

Other priests—though not all—took up the cause of their insulted brother. They made things as unpleasant for me as they could on all public occasions. They refused to sit on committees of which I was a member. They succeeded finally in driving me out of the Gaelic League, though I was at the time a member of the governing body.

The charge made publicly against me was that I wrote immoral books. The booing crowds who heard the accusation had not, of course, read the books. Nor had most of the priests who made the charge. (This is a charitable hypothesis.) But some members of the governing board of the Gaelic League had read them, and knew perfectly well that there is not only nothing immoral, but scarcely a mention of sex in anything I ever wrote. Yet these men joined in the popular clamour.

One of the pleasant results of the publication of my early novels was that I began to meet numbers of journalists. Ireland was at that time very much in the public eye. The Gaelic League was effecting a kind of intel-

lectual and spiritual revolution in the country, awakening the people from long political stupor which followed the death of Parnell. Young men and women were seeing visions and dreaming dreams.

The immediate effect of this intellectual activity, both literary and political, was to make Ireland an interesting country—interesting to outsiders as well as to Irishmen. There had been a time, a few years before, when an English paper which published an article on Ireland “carried passengers” (the phrase is that of a London editor). Quite suddenly the press realised that Ireland was an interesting place. English journalists were despatched across St. George’s Channel to find out what was going on.

Partly because I had written some Irish novels and partly because of my rather unusual position of an Irish clergyman who had become a nationalist and was taking an active part in the affairs of the Gaelic League I was a natural butt for these enquirers. They almost always journeyed to the west of Ireland and when they got to Connaught they used to call on me. Their visits were exceedingly interesting to me, though I could almost always tell before they had talked to me for ten minutes into whose hands they had fallen when they came to Ireland. Some went first to the old-established politicians, like John Dillon or one of the Redmonds. Some struck out a line for themselves and called first upon Sir Horace Plunkett. Others approached Ireland through the secretary of the Gaelic League. Others went again to Mr. T. W. Russell, then head of the Board of Agriculture, to ask him what the present conditions and the future of the country were. A few consorted with what was left of the Tory

landed gentry. They had seen nothing and had heard nothing except what their mentors intended them to see and hear. Thus I could always tell in a few seconds who had been instructing them in Irish affairs.

This experience has made me distrustful ever since of all reports brought home from foreign lands by supposedly independent and intelligent observers. Things may not be the same elsewhere as they were in Ireland; but I can never get over the feeling that the people who write books or articles and make speeches about Russia based on their own personal experiences of that country, are really giving us what some Russian or other wanted them to believe. This is how we treated enquirers who came to Ireland. I cannot suppose that the Russians are less intelligent than we were.

Whatever the value of these enquiries may have been, the enquirers themselves were most agreeable people. Long years afterwards I took part in a discussion at one of Lady Horner's charming dinner parties at the Manor House at Mells. Someone asked what profession produced on the whole the most agreeable men. Were lawyers the pleasantest men to meet, or actors, or writers, or musicians, or politicians? The clergy were not mentioned, perhaps because no one wanted to make me uncomfortable by saying what he thought of them. When it came to my turn I said that of all the various kinds of men I have met in my life I found journalists on the whole the best company. To my immense surprise my choice was greeted by everybody with vigorous protests. Lady Oxford, for some reason, particularly disliked journalists. In such distinguished company, I did not dare to defend my opinion, but I still think that journalists as a class are the

pleasantest men I have met. They are not inclined to talk shop. They are much more anxious to hear other people's opinions than to air their own. They very seldom argue. They are usually well informed on immense numbers of different subjects and none of them is ever rich enough to be offensive.

In my whole experience of these enquirers I only came across one who was difficult to get on with. He dined with me one evening and after dinner sat perfectly silent in my study, not even asking a question. I struggled to keep up a conversation of some sort; but at last I gave up the effort and said to him, "Unless you will say something, I shall stop talking too." He replied with a sickly smile, "Since the publication of *John Bull's Other Island* an English Liberal is afraid to open his lips in Ireland." On the whole, I am inclined to think that it would have been better for Ireland if a few more English Liberals had felt as that man felt.

With many of these passing journalists I formed friendships which lasted and I owe many of my opportunities for free-lance journalistic work, of which I at one time did a good deal, to the kindness of these men. Mr. Bertram Christian, who was one of the first who visited us at Westport, was also the first to give me the chance of writing for the English press. He came over with a party of young Liberals just after the 1906 election. They called themselves the League of Young Liberals or some such name, and were extraordinarily enthusiastic, but quite foolish. Mr. Christian, though his intentions were quite as good as theirs and his enthusiasm little less, had a good deal of common sense about Ireland, no doubt because he himself belonged to an Irish family. He was at that time

either editor or literary editor of the *Morning Leader*, and it was he who first invited me to write occasional articles. My connection with that paper lasted until it ceased to exist. Not long afterwards I became a regular contributor to the *St. James's Gazette*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Daily Mail*, and some other papers, always writing articles about Ireland.

Then came the publication of my *Spanish Gold*, the first book of mine which won me anything more than a semi-political reputation. It was then that I began to make a little money out of my books, to our great satisfaction. The difficulties about my son Robert's education vanished. Our beloved Martin returned to us and Ada had a sufficient staff of maids. We were even able to engage a series of inefficient governesses for our girls. But it soon became apparent that this kind of education was not satisfactory. When they took to writing satires about their instructress, and when she resented a parody of Herrick's "Fair Daffodils" it was evidently time to make a change. We made up our minds to send them to the Alexandra College in Dublin, where Ada had been educated. The head of the college at that time was Miss White, for whom we both had a great respect. We wanted our girls to be under her. Unfortunately they were both too young for the college and we had to send them to the Alexandra School. This suited our elder girl, Theodosia, admirably. It did not suit the younger, Althea. Shortly after her arrival at the school she had an interview with the headmistress and wrote an account of it to us next day. "Yesterday," she wrote, "I was hauled before the queen of this hell who wore a purple velvet gown." After that it seemed unlikely that the experiment of school education

would have good results for her. We brought her home and by a stroke of sheer luck secured the services of Miss Ethel Thomas as her governess. Miss Thomas had been brought up in Lancashire, and life in the extreme west of Ireland was something of an adventure for her. She did not understand us or our ways. Accustomed to the vigorous intonation of Lancashire she could not hear when we spoke in our soft western mumble. She must have found Althea a very difficult child to deal with. But almost at once she settled down with us and there began a friendship which I am thankful to say still continues unbroken.

Next to education for our children, the dearest desire of our hearts was to possess a boat. As soon as we had a few pounds to spare we bought one. She was one of a series of famous sailing dinghies built at Kingstown and known as "Water Wags." We called her the *Mary Kate*, after the little girl in my *Spanish Gold*. This was a simple act of gratitude, for it was that child, with her ragged frock and her silences, who earned us the money with which we bought the boat. The *Mary Kate* was the first of a series of boats which we owned. She was succeeded by *Mary Kate* number two, and afterwards by a third of the same build and with the same name. There was a much larger boat which was christened by our youngest boy, then little more than a baby, *The Gallant Deed*. I have always thought this a charming and original name for a boat. It had a certain Elizabethan flavour about it. Drake or Frobisher might have called a pinnace by that name. She was designed and built for us by a local builder. She was meant to be very fast and we intended to race her, but she turned out rather sluggish and not particularly seaworthy. She was rigged at first with a single head sail, a very large

jib. This had to be changed afterwards for two small sails, because the hauling of the sheets was too much for Ada's arms if we were going to windward in anything like a breeze. We taught our children to sail boats as soon as they were big enough to learn. I have always been sorry that we left Westport before our youngest boy, Seumas, was old enough to learn. He learned a good many other things afterwards at Winchester and Oxford, but I doubt if all of them together was as truly educational as the sailing of a boat on Clew Bay was for the others. We gave the girls a boat of their own as soon as they were old enough to manage her and they used to go out together with a small lugsail in all kinds of weather. I think the happiest days of my life were spent on Clew Bay, in a boat alone with Ada. Though nervous about many things—dogs or motor-cars, for instance—she was quite fearless on the sea. I think this was because she trusted me in a boat, but never believed that I could drive a car. Often we camped out on one of these islands. We learnt to find our way through intricate rock-strewn passages, and to understand the vagaries of singularly eccentric tides. I am sentimental enough to treasure some small stones picked up on Dorinish on my last visit. I knew well that I should see that island no more.

The publication of my *Spanish Gold* and the little success that it achieved brought me a letter from Herbert Trench, my old Haileybury friend, who was then manager of the Haymarket Theatre. He suggested that I should write the play for him. I had never done, nor attempted to do, such a thing and had not the remotest idea how to go about it. I remember writing to him and asking him how long a play ought to be. I was accustomed to meas-

uring novels and articles in thousands and hundreds of words and I supposed that a play would be measured in the same way. Such was my ignorance. But being of a daring spirit I wrote the play. Herbert Trench turned it down. He did not tell me that it was a bad play, but he said he had just produced one with almost the same central idea. I had a very low opinion of that play, so I put it into a drawer and shut it up. There it remained uncared for and unlooked at for several years. Then one day Westport was visited by a troupe of strolling players under the direction and management of Count Markievitch and his wife. He was a Pole but she was an Irishwoman, Miss Constance Gore-Booth, a member of a well-known family of west of Ireland landowners. Madam Markievitch came up to the rectory to see me and in the course of conversation asked me to write a play for her. I was not at all eager to do this, for after my first failure with Herbert Trench I felt pretty sure that I could not write plays, and in any case the theatre did not interest me very much. However, I told her that I had a play laid away in a drawer and if she liked it she could have it. She read the play and professed to be quite enthusiastic about it. In the end she produced it in the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. I never saw her production nor did I attend any of the rehearsals. I felt that I should be even more disgusted with it than I was if I saw it acted.

Madam Markievitch was brilliant but most erratic. The part she took in Irish politics and in the 1916 rebellion is well known. Her connection with Jim Larkin, the Dublin Labour Leader, brought her an uncomfortable reputation. I was not at all sure that I wanted her to take the leading part in my play. There was a scene in which the

heroine, the part which Madam Markievitch played herself, had to emerge from her bedroom in the middle of the night. I was anxious that my name should not be associated with anything *risqué*, and I feared that Madam Markievitch would be inclined to wear as little as possible when making her appearance. I wrote her several letters urging the wearing of a dressing-gown, bedroom slippers and other similar garments. She wanted to reduce her clothing to a minimum.

The correspondence went on for some time. I forget how it ended. Indeed the whole thing passed from my mind. But when Madam Markievitch was arrested after the 1916 rebellion her rooms were searched and her papers seized by a young officer who happened to be a son of a parishioner of mine in Westport. He found a bundle of letters tied up and labelled with my name. He was greatly upset about this, for he feared that I had involved myself in some treasonable correspondence. I was in France at the time serving as chaplain to the Forces, and it would have been very awkward, so this young officer thought, if I were arrested as an Irish rebel. He went out to Ada and told her about the find he had made. He said that he himself had not read the letters, but had handed the packet over intact to some official in Dublin Castle. I do not know whether anybody in authority read these letters, but I can imagine a Chief Secretary—it was Mr. Birrell at the moment—being a little puzzled by the correspondence between Madam Markievitch and me entirely about underclothes. Whatever he thought of it, I am sure of one thing, he cannot really have guessed the real occasion and purpose of those letters.

That was my first experience of play-writing. Oddly

enough, about the time of the production of that play in Dublin, I received two letters, both of them asking me to write plays. One of them was from Mr. Golding Bright, the well-known theatrical agent. The other was from Mr. Cyril Maude, to whom my name had been suggested as a possible playwright by Mrs. Eva Anstruther. I suppose that Madam Markievitch's production in Dublin must have excited me a little, although I did not go to see the play. Ada went up to see it and spent three days in Dublin. I was left alone in Westport and I spent those three nights in writing *General John Regan*.

This play was founded on a story told me by George Russell. It was also told to Lady Gregory, who used it in quite a different way in her play *The Image*. I used to begin about eight o'clock and keep myself awake by drinking green tea, working until two or three in the morning. I got the thing finished in three nights and when Ada came back from Dublin she typed it out for me. Having the two letters before us we tossed up whether we should send the manuscript to Mr. Golding Bright or Mr. Cyril Maude. I was quite without hope of any favourable result, but Ada, who had seen the Dublin play received with enthusiasm, thought that *General John Regan* might be lucky enough to be acted in London. Our tossed coin decided for Mr. Golding Bright and we sent the thing to him. He wrote to me almost at once, saying that he felt sure that he could place the play and asking me to go over to London and see him about it. I went over, greatly excited. I stayed, as we always did when we went to London, with my cousin Blanche, who was married to Colonel Crompton Roberts of the Grenadier Guards. She was nearly as much excited as I was when I told her what had

brought me to London. After breakfast—the Irish mail arrives in London at a most unseemly hour in the morning—I went down to Mr. Bright's office. He told me that he thought well of the play, but asked me to make it a little longer and to introduce another woman character into it. As originally written there was only one woman with an unimportant part and a little girl. I left his office and walked up and down the Strand trying to devise some means of getting a second woman into the play. I went back to my cousin's house and wrote in the part of the resident magistrate's wife. This, when I produced the manuscript, satisfied Mr. Bright. He had the whole thing typed out and a few days after I had returned to Westport I had a letter from him saying that Mr. Charles Hawtrey was prepared to produce the play, acting the principal part himself.

Hitherto life had been great fun, and, indeed, except for one great sorrow, I have found life good fun all the time. Even being very poor is good fun if you take it in the right way and being burnt in effigy has its amusing side if you do not get angry about it. But of all the fun we had in life I think none was greater than that which we got out of this play. Once more, as when I took to novel-writing, we found ourselves associating on the friendliest terms with people with whom we had never come into contact before, actors and actresses. Sir Charles Hawtrey was, I think, charming to everyone. He was perfectly delightful to us. He would have been justified in snubbing, as a bore, a parson who descended on him from the wilds of Mayo. Instead, he treated me not only with unfailing kindness, but with a deference which must surely have been no more than a form of politeness. He con-

sulted Ada, who knew no more about plays than I did, about details of clothes and even allowed her to correct his Irish brogue, which was good, but not quite perfect. The one word he could never manage to say with the proper accentuation was Connemara. I still have a vision of his standing beside Ada in the wings of the theatre, repeating the word after her again and again, but never managing to get the proper Mayo slur.

He asked her to get the dresses of the crowd which appeared in the first and last scenes of the play. He was most anxious that these clothes should be correct and Ada took a very simple way of getting them. We could not spend all our time in London or even very much of it, and we were continually running to and fro between the Apollo Theatre and my parish. When Ada got home she used to go about the town, rather like the man in the "Arabian Nights" story, offering new clothes for old to any man or woman whom she saw wearing picturesque garments. Everyone she approached was glad to make the bargain, and with comparatively small expense she collected an immense mass of garments. They were absolutely correct, the very clothes actually worn by the people in the west of Ireland, where the scene of the play was laid. Charles Hawtrey had them all disinfected before he ventured to offer them to the London company. Even after these precautions there was trouble. There was a young lady who was much more eager to look pretty than to look her part. She would arrange her head shawl in a way which Ada knew to be incorrect. There was arguing about it and Ada, who was anxious to get the thing perfect, appealed to Charles Hawtrey. He instantly sacked the girl, which was the very

last thing that Ada wanted. It was really a very depressing business; for the girl came to us the next day begging us to intercede for her and to get her taken back. She had given up the idea of looking pretty and was prepared to wear her shawl as Ada wanted her to. I think she was taken back in the end, but Charles Hawtrey was rather stiff about it.

When finally the play was produced, pictures were published in various papers and these were eagerly bought in Westport. The people went about the streets saying to each other, "There's Tommy's coat," "And there's Molly's petticoat," recognising the garments which they had once worn. In this matter of dressing the crowd Ada had two people to help her, Ethel Thomas, who was still superintending Althea's education. She was most skilful in choosing and obtaining the garments. And Mrs. St. John Ervine, who knew the west of Ireland and how people dressed.

The play, when it had made its London success, was immediately accepted for a New York production by the Liebler Company. We were, of course, anxious to see it performed there, and at that very time there came to me an invitation to go on a lecture tour in the United States. I had heard of these lecture tours, and I thought it would be very great fun to make one. My one worry was my parish. I could not leave it for a long period of time, or at least what seemed to me a long period of time, three months or so. We solved the difficulty by my resigning my position as Rector of Westport. The place, although I loved it very much, had become difficult for me to live in. Many of my parishioners felt very strongly about the views I held about Irish affairs. The Roman Catholics and Nationalist

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people did not like me any better. In spite of my real love for the place and the people, the difficulties were too great. We felt that it would be much better for us and better for the people if I resigned the position I had held for twenty-one years. This left us absolutely free.

CHAPTER IX

A HISTORY of Ireland during the first decade of the present century would be an interesting book. During that period idealism took possession of the minds and souls of our younger men. Even those of us who had lost "the golden heritage" of youth, felt the coming of the new spirit, like a fresh morning breeze, stirring the fetid atmosphere of some room where men have sat all night. Everything that came afterwards had its origin in those ten years. The fevered rebellion of Easter week, 1916; the years of sulky resentment which followed its suppression; the inspiration of the young poets of the brief and brilliant literary renaissance; the fervour of the language revivalists; the sudden dawn of political hope which came with the discovery of the Sinn Fein policy—all had their beginnings in those ten years.

Perhaps someone will write that history soon, before the generation which saw the visions has wholly passed away. I have neither the knowledge nor the temperament for such a work and, if I had, this would be no place for it. All I want to attempt is some little account of how this new spirit in Ireland affected our lives and how our little part in all that was going on led in the end to our leaving Westport. We were happy and contented there. We expected, indeed hoped, to end our days there. But *Dis aliter visum*. Westport became impossible for us and we undesirable for Westport.

There used to be a saying when I was a young man to

the effect that everything of any importance in Ireland began with a P, politicians, priests, potatoes, poets, poteen and pigs. These could be put in any order, according to the opinion of their importance held by the speaker, though there were some ill-tempered grumblers who said that Pigs ought always to come last, being a generic term which covered the other five. The Gaelic language suffers from an antipathy to the letter p, so much beloved by the Welsh members of the Celtic group. In Irish Gaelic even "pater" had to get rid of its p, and it must have been hard for the Gaels to reconcile themselves to a patron saint with the name Patrick. I suppose it was some kind of reaction from this inhibition which put English-speaking Ireland into the power of all the p's.

Sooner or later, living in a very Irish part of Ireland, it was almost inevitable that we should get mixed up with these p's, as we did, with all of them except Poteen, which never came much our way. Perhaps it would have been better for us if it had. The drinking of whisky punch, even to excess, would have led to less trouble.

About politics, during the early part of our life in Westport, we cared nothing and knew nothing. We had both been brought up Tories, in the strictest sect of that faith, and there was no more thorough-going Tory than the Irish gentleman of the latter part of the nineteenth century. After our marriage we became, for a brief period, Socialists of the Fabian kind, and read the works of Wells, Shaw, Belfort Bax and other thinkers whom we regarded as advanced. But that was a short-lived phase, and we soon lost interest in what, for us, had never been more than a sentimental excitement.

So detached had we been from public affairs during our

period of Church History study that for a long time we did not even take in a daily paper and were quite ignorant of what was happening in the world. We were interested in the parish and the people. We were interested in our hermits. We were quite uninterested in what was happening in the world, even in our own country.

There was this much excuse for us. Since the great betrayal of Parnell Irish politics had become more and more sordid. There were endless personal squabbles. There was mean greed and miserable intrigue. Almost every vestige of idealism had passed away. Yeats wrote despairingly of that sad period:

“Romantic Ireland’s dead and gone.
It’s with O’Leary in his grave.”

But Yeats himself was witness that romantic Ireland survived, in his heart and in the hearts of all the young men who followed him in creating that hectic revival of the literary spirit which promised so much, accomplished so little and perished so soon. And though O’Leary, that fine old Fenian, was dead, his spirit smouldered in the hearts of a few men here and there living in obscure places, silent and unknown. It was ready to burst into a flame of ardent nationalism when Arthur Griffith blew on it with his grotesquely-named, altogether impossible “Hungarian Policy.”

The wind of enthusiasm, like the Spirit of God, blows where it lists and we cannot tell whence it comes or to what obscure places it may go. It reached us first in a curious way.

I founded in Westport a little literary society, which at

first used to meet in my house, but soon grew too large for that and had to migrate to the schoolroom. Our plan was the usual one. We used to read each other papers on any subject that occurred to us and discuss them afterwards. The difficulty in a place like Westport was to get a sufficient number of papers. Hardly anyone felt competent to write about anything. A good deal of the paper-writing fell to me, and I was no more competent than anyone else. I fell back on such knowledge as I had acquired during my college days, and on my fondness, which had never left me, for the English poets. I think I must have contributed two or three papers on Wordsworth and Browning. But it was plainly impossible for the society to survive if it was fed on nothing but papers by me. I pressed Ada into the service. She was all her life most unwilling to set pen to paper, except in the form of letters, and hated putting herself forward in any public way. It was with the utmost difficulty that I persuaded her to write a paper on the Young Irish Movement of the middle of the nineteenth century. She knew something about it at second-hand, owing to her association, as a girl, with Lady Ferguson, the widow of Sir Samuel Ferguson, who was one of the prominent literary figures of that period, a man whose poetry has been forgotten, though it deserved a better fate.

Lady Ferguson was a Guinness and therefore a distant cousin of Ada's. She was a most hospitable old lady and established during her widowhood a sort of salon in Dublin. One of her great delights was to collect in her house as many Guinness cousins as she could. When she had got thirty or forty of these young people together, she used to announce to them that they were all cousins. Ada's association with her had brought her some knowledge of

the Young Irish Movement, chiefly of the literary figures in it. She had often told me about her talks with Lady Ferguson, who had known many of the Young Irelanders. At last I persuaded her to write a paper about Davis, Mitchell, "Speranza" and the rest of them. Neither she nor I had the faintest idea that a paper on such a subject would be a cause of offence. But it was. Many members of our little society belonged to the class of Anglo-Irish gentry. They were distrustful of anything Irish and very much shocked at the thought of anyone speaking kindly of men tainted with nationalism. Ada, without meaning any harm by it, spoke with warm admiration of some of the Young Irelanders, and especially of their verse, of which we had a collection, in a little volume called *The Spirit of the Nation*. It is just possible that her indiscretion might have passed without creating anything worse than a feeling of annoyance; but, unfortunately, there was present at that meeting a man who was not a member of our little society. He was a strong nationalist of Fenian sympathies, just one of those in whom the O'Leary spirit survived. He and I were in touch over our sailing on the bay, of which he was as fond as I was. Having listened to Ada's paper, he asked leave to speak in the course of the discussion which followed. I gladly granted it. He supported Ada's view of the Young Irelanders with a great deal more zeal than tact. There was a general feeling of uneasiness and annoyance among our regular members. Then I did a very stupid thing. With my mind full of the literary work of the Young Ireland period and very little thought of politics, I recited some of Mangan's Jacobite Nationalist poetry. I suppose I had a vague idea that the exquisite music of the verse might sooth the savage spirit

of my parishioners. I ought to have known better: "The Dark Rosaleen" simply aggravated things. I became suspect among the very people who had been and should have been my closest friends.

I have no complaint to make. The trouble was of my own making and for the most part my friends were wonderfully tolerant and patient with me. Many of them had lived through the "bad times" of the land war, when their lives were in constant danger, when men came armed even to church and laid their revolvers in the book-rests of the pews, when many had endured the slow torture of being boycotted. Such memories bite deep into the consciousness and are not easily obliterated. It was only too easy to feel that when I expressed Nationalist sympathies I was doing something plainly wrong. There was something more than the feeling of resentment, common everywhere, against a man who has deserted his class and party. There was the conviction that I, the rector of the parish, was sinning, and sinning against light.

Yet few of our friendships were actually broken and personal affection survived. Only once was I the subject to anything like an insult. I called on one of my leading parishioners and met him by chance, at the door of his house. Without shaking hands with me or speaking any word of greeting he asked me bluntly whether I was still a member of the Gaelic League. I replied that I was. Without another word, he stepped back into his house and shut the door in my face. This was a shock to me, but it was the only violent shock of the kind which I received.

The smouldering or burning resentment of our friends had the unfortunate effect of driving us farther in the direction of nationalism. We took to reading Irish history,

a fatal thing for anyone to do who wishes to remain a sound unionist. We began to associate with people known to our friends as "blackguards," from whom the respectable held sternly aloof. The more severely we were frowned on the worse we became. Such is the perversity of human nature.

Then came our brief and ill-starred connection with the Gaelic League. It began almost by accident. Dr. Douglas Hyde, the founder and for a long time the President of the League, was one of those simple-minded, large-hearted enthusiasts whom it is impossible not to love. He was the son of a clergyman of the Church of Ireland and a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. He believed that spiritual regeneration would come to Ireland through the study of her own language, or what had once been her own language, for plainly it was so no more. This belief, which seemed silly at first sight, turned out in the end to be well founded. The new nationalism was, in fact, the creation of the Gaelic League.

But Dr. Hyde sincerely desired to keep clear of politics. His reiterated assertion that the league was a non-political body was perfectly honest and, in fact, for a long time, true. But, if "no man can set bounds to the march of a nation," as Parnell said, it is even more certain that no man can determine the workings of a spirit. Dr. Hyde and his league revived an Irish consciousness and created a sense of pure patriotism, where no such things existed before. These in due time expressed themselves in political aspiration and political action. But Dr. Hyde was very far from wishing or foreseeing the Sinn Fein movement.

It happened that he was attacked with some vigour in *The Church of Ireland Gazette*, a paper which was at the

time strongly Tory and anti-Nationalist in its policy, and ready to attack anyone suspected of Nationalist sympathies. I did not know Dr. Hyde personally and was not in any way connected with the league; but the attack struck me as unjust. I wrote in defence of Dr. Hyde. If I had remembered the words of Solomon I might have escaped a great deal of trouble. "He that meddleth with strife that belongeth not to him, is as one who taketh a dog by the ears." Dr. Hyde's character was no affair of mine and, had I been wise, I should have left him to defend himself. There followed a long and acrimonious correspondence and I became more suspect than ever, not only in my own parish, but in the Church generally.

After the controversy died down Dr. Hyde paid me a visit in Westport. So did a friend and a warm supporter of his, Miss Nelly O'Brien. She was a sister of Dermot O'Brien, who had been my schoolfellow at Temple Grove. Under their influence Ada and I were attracted to the Gaelic League and soon joined it.

As in duty bound, we set to work to learn Irish. Perhaps we were getting too old to learn any new language. Perhaps we were stupid. Perhaps we were lazy. We never got very far, and although we learned to read and translate easy prose I do not think that either of us could ever have become a fluent speaker, in spite of the fact that we had a most painstaking teacher, a young man, the son of a Westport shopkeeper who had spoken the language ever since he was able to speak at all. In my case, though not in Ada's, there was a special obstacle to learning any language. I was born without a vestige of an ear for music, and the same inability to hear musical notes prevents my hearing the sounds of foreign words in such a way as to be able to

reproduce them. I remember spending an hour one afternoon sitting on the top of a cliff at Renvyle, in County Galway, trying to say the Irish word for seal. There is a delicately aspirated guttural in the middle of the word which does not occur in English speech. I never succeeded in uttering it, though my teacher, a most courteous old fisherman, was very patient with me. It reminded me of my curate days, when Mrs. Robinson tried to teach me to sing.

The Gaelic League very soon promoted me to undeserved honour, making me a member of the central governing board, a position from which, as I have already told, I was afterwards driven with ignominy. While I was a member I did my best to serve the league by writing in its defence and speaking (though only in English) in places where perhaps other members would scarcely have got a hearing. The Queen's University in Belfast seemed an unlikely place for Gaelic League propaganda to succeed, but I remember speaking at an enthusiastic meeting there, in which Lord Castletown and Mr. Francis Biggar took the chief parts.

Looking back on it all now I can see that there was a great deal that was ridiculous about this enthusiasm for a language which many of the most ardent revival enthusiasts did not know. I remember receiving a visit one afternoon from a young man who established himself firmly in my house, where he was not wanted. He stayed for more than two hours, during which he declined to speak or listen to a word of English, though that was the only language he really knew. He was ready to talk what he believed to be Irish, but I could not understand a word he said. Nor, as I afterwards learned, could the Irish-speak-

ing peasants in Achill with whom he conversed, in what he thought was their own tongue. They were puzzled but polite and believed that he was talking Russian. As an alternative to his Irish he offered me French, a language which I can usually understand fairly well when spoken by Frenchmen. But this young man's French completely baffled me and I could only find out what he wanted to say by making him write it down. His remarks, when I did get at them, were not particularly interesting, certainly not worth all the trouble we both took over them.

Once, when dining with an ardent Gaelic Leaguer, this time one who really did speak Irish, I was asked to say grace. I began with the familiar words, "For what we are about to—," but he stopped me before I got any further, and told me, a little sternly, to say it in Irish. I knew no Irish grace and had to confess as much. I was then given the alternative of saying grace in Latin, a language which for some reason was permissible though English was not. I felt safe in saying "*Benedictus benedicat.*" But I was not so safe as I thought. In the flurry of the moment I forgot about the new pronunciation of Latin and gave the "I" in "*benedicat*" its English sound, as I had been taught at school. That, as it turned out, was almost as hurtful to the feelings of my host as an English grace would have been and I went through the meal in disgrace.

But in spite of these absurdities—and there were plenty more like them—the Gaelic League did a great work in awakening a spirit of unselfish patriotism among young men and restoring to Irish life that idealism which had been lost since the days of Parnell's fall. Young Gaelic Leaguers, afire with the new spirit, came to loathe the sordidness of local politics and to despise the party at West-

minster, which, since it threw over Parnell, had become little more than the obedient handmaid of the English Liberals.

Even my limited knowledge of the language made Ireland a more interesting country to live in than it was before, if only on account of the joy of interpreting place-names. It was a joy to discover that a hill which I had always known simply as Sheeon, was really Shee Wawn—the hill of the white fairy. It was a special pleasure to find an island off the coast of Galway, of which the Irish name means the Island of Souls (how exquisite and beautiful!) but which was marked on the Admiralty chart as Sole Island. It seemed to me then—but I was not so sure about it now—that these two translations of the same name were typical of the two nations, the Irish with their thoughts on the immortal part of man, the English with minds which jumped at once to the thought of fried fish.

My connection with the Gaelic League brought me into touch with one of the most remarkable Irishmen of my time—Arthur Griffith. He was at that time editor, I think proprietor, of a little weekly paper, and had a grubby little office in a back street in Dublin. I used to go and see him there, though I cannot recollect the occasion or reason of my first visit. Arthur Griffith was utterly unlike any Irish politician that I knew. He had no gift of private conversation and indeed talked very little. He used to look at me through pince-nez glasses which always seemed on the point of falling off his nose. When he did speak it was briefly and coldly. Yet, from the first time I met him, I was greatly attracted by him. He was a man of absolute honesty and no idea of self-glorification or self-advancement ever seemed to enter his head. He had a very clear intellect

and was one of those rare men who never shrink from the logical conclusion of any line of thought, or seek to obscure meaning with misty words. I never discovered in him a trace of a sense of humour. Things seemed to him right or wrong, wise or unwise, but they never seemed funny; though that is what most things are. He was more idea-possessed than any one I have ever met and the idea which possessed him to the exclusion of every other was that of an Ireland free to lead her own life and manage her own affairs.

The beginning of the Sinn Fein movement was the publication of his pamphlet, "The Resurrection of Hungary." It told the story of the Magyar struggle for independence in those days when Kossuth was a popular hero, and afterwards when the armed rebellion had been suppressed. The story, as Arthur Griffith told it, was not so much history as tendentious romance, founded on a very prejudiced manipulation of the facts. But it was written in plain, vigorous prose, like the prose of John Mitchell, the young Irishman whom Griffith in many ways resembled.

The publication of that pamphlet sounded the death-knell of the Irish parliamentary party, though no one recognised this at the time. It offered young Irishmen an alternative to the policy of perpetual bargainings and intrigues at Westminster. Boiled down to the bone the new policy was simply one of passive resistance. We were to make the English government of Ireland impossible by refusing to recognise English law. No more representatives were to be sent to Parliament to dispute or approve of anything that Parliament did. English laws were to be ignored, even at the cost of suffering penalties. The government of Ireland by England was to be shown to be a naked

tyranny, unredeemed by any pretence of people's consent. Later on, much later on, the policy was profoundly altered by the creation of a system of terrorism, and it was this, rather than the passive resistance, which secured the final success. The victory was won by the gunmen; but it was Arthur Griffith's idealism which inspired them.

The pamphlet was very widely read all over Ireland by young men who had little or no power even in local affairs, who had no influence at all in the councils of the "tried and proved" managers of the official Nationalist party. It did not seem to matter what these boys thought or felt. They had no experience of public life and no knowledge of how things were managed by men. They were mocked at when they were noticed at all. The name Sinn Fein had not yet come into use. Arthur Griffith's policy was known as the "Hungarian Policy." His followers were described as the "Green Hungarian Band," an allusion to a party of musicians who advertised themselves widely at that time under the name "The Blue Hungarian Band." The Irish, especially the Dubliners, have a talent for devising nicknames. "The Black and Tans" was an inspiration. The new semi-military police, to whom it was given, used to go about at first in black tunics and khaki trousers, a combination which appealed to the popular sense of the comic. "Tudor's Toughs" (from General Tudor who commanded them) was another name for the same corps, but it never passed into general use. Another good nickname was "The Horrors," which was used by profane persons about the Gaelic Leaguers. It arose not from their personal appearance, though many of them had that grim look which often goes with great moral earnestness, but from their habit of addressing each other as "A Chara,"

which means "Oh Friend," and is pronounced "A horra."

The name Sinn Fein was a fortunate discovery. The words came from the chorus of an Irish song written by Dr. Hyde. They mean "Ourselves," and suggested the very nature of the new policy, self-reliance. There was to be no more looking to England or any other foreign country for the help which should come from "ourselves alone."

Arthur Griffith held no great public meetings and made no speeches. He worked away silently in his cubby-hole of an office at the production of his weekly paper. The circulation of the paper steadily increased. It came to be recognised that Arthur Griffith was a man who would not be frightened out of saying what he thought true or seduced into saying anything else by the prospect of some advantage. He deliberately refused to regard politics as the science of the second-best, and taught that compromise, so far from being the highest form of practical wisdom, is the unworthy method of cowards. This made a strong appeal to the young, to whom the Gaelic League had taught idealism.

After a while an attempt was made to establish a daily paper devoted to the Sinn Fein policy. There was never much money behind the enterprise, though many of us ventured small sums for the purchase of shares in what was supposed to be a company. But, though money was scarce, brains and enthusiasm were abundant. Unfortunately it takes money to buy and run a printing press. The machines of the new paper, bought second-hand and little better than scrap-iron, broke down badly. Then we came on one of the touches of broad comedy which never fail to cast a sudden light on Irish affairs, perhaps on all human

affairs. For some time the new organ of the most extreme and revolutionary nationalism was printed on the machines of the *Irish Times*, the leading Unionist paper in southern Ireland. The official Nationalist press, having exulted too soon in what seemed like the collapse of a new rival, looked on with envy.

In all this seething new life I had little or no part, except that of a deeply-interested spectator, but I did make some effort, through articles in the press and occasional speeches, to explain to my Unionist friends what Arthur Griffith's position was and what he was aiming at. I also tried to explain and get the Sinn Feiners to understand the strength of the convictions of Unionist Ulster. I wanted them to see that Ulster could neither be ignored nor over-ridden in any Irish settlement.

My hope was that the men of my own race and creed might be induced to remember that their grandfathers were great Irishmen, filled with the spirit of nationalism; that their loyal reliance on England was a futile thing, since all English parties were equally likely to let them down, that by throwing themselves into the new nationalism they might win security, honour and power in the Ireland of the future. That was a silly hope, and my little effort to realise it had only one result. I got into very hot water.

But even the hottest of hot water is a pleasant thing once it has had time to cool down from scalding-point, and I cherish the memory of one incident, one of the wholly good things which happened to me as a result of my nationalism. I wrote a political article in one of the English papers. The Primate of All Ireland, Dr. Crozier, disliked something in the article and said so publicly, with

emphasis. Now Dr. Crozier had been one of my father's curates, and I, as a small boy, had a great admiration and affection for him. He was very kind to me and once at least took me with him when he went for his summer holiday. It was on that holiday that he taught me to play lawn tennis, then quite a new game. I was very sorry that he felt it necessary to denounce my article, and I was annoyed because I thought he had been unjust to me. I wrote to him and said so. He replied. I replied to him. He replied to me. I wrote again. I suppose that in the end I lost my temper and wrote as no humble country clergyman should write to an Archbishop. There came a day when I received one of my own letters back marked, "Returned unopened by direction of the Primate." That, I thought, finished our friendship. I was sure that the Archbishop would never speak to me again. I felt that I did not particularly want to speak to him. Such estrangements were all too common in those days of political excitement. But this one had a very happy ending.

Years afterwards, when I was rector of the tiny parish of Carnalway, Ada and I were invited to lunch by Lady Milbank, who had lived, since her husband was killed in the early part of the war, at Mullaboden, her old home, a house not far away from Carnalway. Her note told us that we were to meet the Archbishop of Armagh. I was very doubtful about the wisdom of accepting the invitation; but we remembered that Lady Milbank was not only a charming and beautiful woman, but was a good hostess. Nothing uncomfortable was likely to happen in her house.

Nothing uncomfortable did happen, though there were no other guests and we were a party of four. I have since thought that the Archbishop himself suggested the invita-

tion and planned the party. At all events Lady Milbank took Ada away with her immediately after lunch. The Archbishop and I were left alone. There was not even a moment of discomfort. The Archbishop crossed the room, put his arm on my shoulder and said, "Come along, Jim." We passed out through the long window and, his arm still on my shoulder, crossed the lawn towards Lady Milbank's wonderful rock garden, then in the full beauty of its spring-time flowering. But we did not talk about it, nor the blaze of the massed tulips in the borders near it. Nor did we talk of Ireland or politics. The Archbishop went back to the very old days when we played tennis—I a boy of nine or ten—on the lawn in front of his father's house. He reminded me how we made up our minds that, though not actually forbidden by the rules, volleying was bad form, a thing a high-minded player would not do, something like potting the white ball in billiards. I was then a man of fifty, long past the age of facile emotion, but I was as near to tears then as I have ever been in my life.

A short time afterwards the Bishop held a confirmation service in my little church and soon, together, we gave to those young people, upon whose heads he so recently laid his hands, "the most comfortable sacrament of the body and blood of Christ." I do not think that I ever saw him again. But at one other point he touched my life closely. My elder daughter, Theo, married Major Hickey while we were still at Carnalway. They went away together for their honeymoon to the west of Ireland. In the train the Archbishop met them and somehow guessed who they were. He gave them his blessing.

It has been my lot in life to know eight archbishops, four of them intimately. They were and are, all of them, men

of large hearts, but none could surpass the magnanimity of Dr. Crozier. It must be very difficult indeed for an archbishop to forgive what seems like the insolence of one of his clergy.

With this story I must end these notes of my brief and unfortunate connection with Irish politics. It is not for me to write a history of that period of high hopes, shining enthusiasm and ghastly deeds. For me it is enough to have learned that greater than all these things is love.

CHAPTER X

WE shall go adventuring, out, away adventuring.

Not for us the meadow land, the sleek and sleepy kine,
Not for us the homestead, with drowsy, smoking chimney
stacks.

Ours the singing breezes and the spindrift from the brine.

Crested waves are leaping and the tide is flowing strong
for us.

All the winds are shouting about islands far away,
Islands where are palm trees, where no foot of man has
trodden yet

Waiting for adventurers who dare to leave the bay.

We have gone adventuring. Love, the sky is clouded now.

Shall we put the tiller up and run for home again?
Shall we leave adventuring? Are our spirits brave enough
To face the driven spindrift, the tempest and the rain?

Sheet the mainsail in again. We are true adventurers.

Sweeter than the home sounds, the crying of the wind.
Decks all sloped and slippery, green seas breaking over us,
These, and not security, make living to our mind.

End of our adventuring? Is there any end to it?

We are but beginning when upon us comes the night.
We shall lift our hearts up bravely, oh, beloved one,
To meet the great adventure in the country out of sight.

These are the only verses I ever wrote for Ada in my life. Though I was her lover from the day I first met her, I somehow escaped the habit of writing "woeful ballads" to my "mistress' eyebrow." Indeed, I think these were the only verses I wrote since my early days at Haileybury, when extreme misery drove me to make rhymes. I quote them here not because I suppose them to be good (I know they are very poor) but because they express the spirit in which we left Westport.

At last, well on in middle age, we were free to do what we wished and go where we liked. Even family ties did not bind us very firmly. Robert, our eldest boy, was established in the office of the *Irish Times*, where he wrote minor leading articles on pre-historic skulls, colour photography and kindred subjects of interest at the moment, about which the Irish Unionists might be supposed to be seeking information. Theo and Althea, our two girls, were at the Alexandra College, under the care of Miss White, a lady whom both Ada and I liked and trusted. We felt that we could safely leave them there for a while. Seumas, our youngest boy, was still very small, but he had acquired for himself a nurse who was devoted to him. She was a County Mayo girl and had been christened Sabina. To us and to the child she was always Biny. We were sure that she would take care of him wherever we were. He and she went to be the guests of Ada's sister, Mrs. Philip Johnston, so our minds were easy about them.

We were free to go adventuring, the thing we had always desired to do, the thing we had never been able to do, generally for the reason Cæsar gave for not attacking the Gauls oftener than he did: *Propter inopiam pecuniae*. But I fear we made poor use of our opportunity. We did

not attempt to get to any South-Sea island, where we might have walked about with no clothes on and fed on coconuts and bananas. We never thought of anticipating Mr. Peter Fleming's exploration of Brazil. The nearest we got to that was a plan of mine for going up the Amazon in a Booth Line steamer. That came to nothing, because Ada was convinced that she would be bitten by poisonous insects if she went there.

Indeed, our adventuring was so poor a business that I am ashamed to call it by that name. We crossed the Atlantic in the *Minnetonka*, one of the Atlantic Transport Company's steamers, and we came back in the *Lusitania*. Could anything be duller, except perhaps what followed. We spent the greater part of the next year in an English village. Most people would not call that adventuring at all, but for us the year after we left Westport was full of excitement and delight. Everything was new to us and we were almost care-free.

We went to America partly because my publisher there was very anxious that I should. He thought that a lecture tour would increase the sale of my books. He was quite wrong about that. I have made two lecture tours in the United States. The first had the result of decreasing the sales of my books and the second very nearly stopped them altogether. I suppose I lectured very badly. The Americans did not like either what I said or what I was. In the end I realised that they meant nothing when they said, "I'm vurry vurry glad to meet you." They were not.

But the lecture tour was not our chief reason for crossing the Atlantic. My *General John Regan* was to be produced in New York, and we were anxious to see how it got on. It was during the rehearsals in the Hudson Theatre that

we first met our charming and clever country-woman, Maire O'Neill, whose first name all English people insist on pronouncing as if it meant that she was a female horse. She was acting the part of Mary Ellen, which was played in London by Cathleen Nesbitt.

That meeting gave occasion for my first experience of American journalism. Next morning one of the New York papers had an account of the scene. "Miss O'Neill danced across the stage, blowing kisses to the doctor." In America all clergymen are ex-officio doctors. A medical man is only a doc. "Begorra, doctor," said she, "but it's tearing mad with you I am for not writing a bigger part for me." To which I was reported to have replied: "'Sure and if I'd known it was yourself that was to act it I'd have had nobody else in the play at all at all.'" That was a gallant effort to endow us with real Irish brogues, but the begorras and sures were quite imaginary. So were the blown kisses.

We had very good fun with the play in America, especially in Atlantic City, where it was "tried out" before the New York production. We made friends with the rest of the company in that amazing place. If I ever suffer an attack of delirium tremens I am sure that my worst "horrors" will be the visions of Atlantic City.

When, at last, we left America, the whole company came down to see us off in the *Lusitania* at midnight. They brought a band with them, which must have been annoying to the other passengers. Just at the moment of parting Maire O'Neill pressed on us a small parcel which contained a frock for her baby girl. She asked us to post it when we got back to England. Twenty years afterwards I went to watch the production of my play as a talkie film. I was startled by the familiarity of the voice, manner and

intonation of the actress who was playing the part of Mary Ellen. She turned out to be Maire O'Neill's daughter, for whom, twenty years before, I had brought home a baby frock from America.

On our first evening in New York we dined with Mr. Bourke Cochran, a clever, eloquent, agreeable and rather flamboyant Irish American. I think it must have been Mr. Sydney Brooks, then in New York on some journalistic enterprise, who induced Mr. Cochran to invite us. Mr. Brooks was one of the journalists who used to visit us in Westport and the friendship which began then lasted, to our great advantage. He did much to make our stay in New York pleasant for us. The only other guests at that dinner were Benjamin Guinness, Ada's first cousin, and his wife Bridget. It was odd that we should have met, at the table of a man we did not know, the only two people in the entire City of New York with whom we had any connection. Mr. Cochran did not ask them to meet us or us to meet them. He knew nothing of our relationship. Our meeting at his table was a surprise to all of us.

The Guinnesses then lived in a fine old house in Washington Square, and were famous in New York for their hospitality, especially to literary and artistic people. At their house we spent much time and met many people whom we were glad to know.

After our return to England I wrote an account of our visit to America and our experiences there, in a little book which I called *Connaught to Chicago*. I doubt whether any, even of my most devoted friends, ever read that book, but the fact that it exists, or did exist, saves me from writing all over again what I thought of America and American people. The opinions of casual travellers about the

countries they visit are almost invariably dull and quite invariably erroneous. I learnt this truth while I was watching Englishmen, otherwise intelligent, discovering Ireland. My only reason for writing a book of the kind was that I wanted the money which Messrs. Nisbett paid me for it, and the one part of the business of which I am the least proud is that I refused to take more than half of what Mr. Christian, the director of that firm, offered me. That was an act of almost excessive honesty, and I can only account for it by recollecting that while in America I was a good deal in the company of my cousin, Walter Hannay.

Walter Hannay is a good deal younger than I am, too young to have been my playmate when his brothers and I sported together as boys at Portrush. When we went to America he was living in Memphis, engaged in making a fortune out of a business which he had built up for himself. He had done a great deal more than create a prosperous business. He had established for himself a reputation for probity and upright dealing, which, as I soon discovered, made the name which he and I bear a highly-honoured one in the American commercial world. Even to this day, though he has long ceased to live in America, it is believed that a man called Hannay will neither repudiate nor "lie down on" a contract, "though it be to his own hindrance." It is my sincere hope and belief that my two sons, now partners in that business, will maintain this reputation—not an easy thing to do in America, where commercial honour is rarer than in England. In England there is, at the very worst, a belief that honesty pays in the end, being in fact the best policy. American business men do not always think so. Whether this is inevitable in republics, or is the result of the absence of the steady influence

of an aristocracy, I do not know. Perhaps it comes from the lack of that despised and derided thing, "The public-school spirit."

But if the commercial morality of the American business world is inferior to that prevalent in England, their Civil Service rises to heights of honesty undreamed of in this country. The American Treasury once owed me a small sum of money for overpaid income-tax. They admitted the justice of my claim, but they kept me waiting for thirteen months before they made up their minds to "cash up." My amazement was great when a cheque at length arrived with interest at the rate of four per cent added, for the whole period during which they had kept my money. English income-tax authorities would fall down in fits and die foaming at the mouth if such a thing were suggested to them, and yet we boast of our incorruptible Civil Service. And the Americans went even further. A couple of months later I received a further cheque for ten cents, with an apologetic letter telling me that in reviewing the whole transaction the Treasury had discovered an error in calculating the amount of interest due to me.

It was while we were staying with Walter Hannay, during a lull in the lecturing business, that we made the acquaintance of another cousin, Claude Hannay, and his charming American wife. They lived at that time in Clarksdale, in the state of Mississippi, in a house which had survived unchanged since the old slave-owning days. In that state the negroes far outnumbered the whites, and it was there that I first came to understand the difficulty of the American colour problem. I had never before realised the strength of the anti-negro feeling among the southern whites. Years afterwards we came to know Claude

and his wife very well when they left America and settled down in Dinard.

We sailed home on the *Lusitania*, and in spite of the very bad, wintry weather had an exceedingly pleasant voyage. My cousin Walter Hannay had some influence with the Cunard Company and secured an excellent cabin for us. Mr. Sydney Brooks, a fellow passenger, saw to it that we were thoroughly comfortable. We were in great luck in falling in with pleasant people on board, so that the whole voyage was delightful. Indeed, my experience of Atlantic crossings has always been the same. I invariably meet agreeable people whose companionship makes the voyage a pleasure, even in the worst of weather. It is a pity that steamer-made friendships seldom survive the journey. But that also is my experience.

We reached Dublin early in December and took a house in Fitzwilliam Square, large enough to contain us all. We wanted to have our children with us for the Christmas holidays and looked forward to all sorts of festivities.

Some time ago one of the enterprising newspaper men who got up what they call Symposiums (the *Oxford Dictionary* admits this plural though it prefers Symposia) asked me to write an account of my most exciting Christmas. I never had an exciting Christmas; but if I had been asked for my most uncomfortable and disastrous Christmas I could have written it down for him quite easily. It was the one we spent in Dublin immediately after returning from our first visit to America. We found both girls ill when we got home and had to put them to bed in the house we had taken. We also had to hire a hospital nurse. Almost immediately Ada caught their disease and I then had to hire not only another hospital

nurse, but a second doctor. Our girls were under the care of a lady practitioner; but Ada demanded a man. She suffered from a distrust of her own sex. It was pure prejudice on her part. She did not get well a bit quicker than the girls did. Nor was there any discernible difference in the treatment.

The result of all this was that there was no room for me in the house and I had to go to my club to sleep. Finally, I had to take my meals there. That was because our parlourmaid was so persistently rude to the nurses that meals at home became a trial. She began by refusing to hand them cigarettes after dinner and went on to express her disapproval of them in other ways. The nurses, to maintain their dignity I suppose, insisted on smoking after every meal. The parlourmaid scowled at them. They sniffed at the parlourmaid and things became so uncomfortable for me that I took to eating at the University Club. I do not know what happened to the parlourmaid and the nurses after that. Perhaps they made friends, though this is unlikely. Like cats and dogs, nurses and servants have a natural antipathy.

But I ought not to have grumbled. Ada's Christmas was far worse than mine. With a temperature above a hundred she had to lie in bed listening to detailed accounts of the love affairs of those nurses, a very trying experience. Nurses are "ministering angels." I admire their devotion to duty, their tenderness and skill. I abase myself before their continual self-sacrifice. But they are not, as a rule, brilliant conversationalists. There was one—she nursed Ada through diphtheria—who was an exception. She told us about a doctor in her hospital, "the nicest doctor she ever met, for he'd never pass you in the corridor without

putting his arm round you and giving you a squeeze." We knew that doctor quite well, which added point to the story. Whether she was giving me a hint I do not know. If she was I fear that she left our house with a low opinion of me. I shall never figure in her reminiscences as "the nicest parson I have ever met." I have all my life suffered from an incurable dislike of casual endearments.

However, these troubles blew over, as such troubles generally do. Ada and the girls recovered. We joyfully sent the nurses back to their young men. Both doctors said good-bye, thoroughly well pleased at the success of their treatment. Robert was settled down in comfortable lodgings. Our youngest child, Seumas, who was about six years old, and his west of Ireland nurse, remained perfectly well. The one pleasure of that Christmas was taking him to the pantomime.

We were free to go adventuring again, and we chose to take a house in an English village, intending to live there for six months at least. This does not sound exciting, and looking back on that time now, when I know as much about English villages as I want to, I wonder why we did it. Yet there was something to be said for our choice. We knew nothing about rural England. It was to us quite as strange as any country in the world, with the advantage over a Balkan state that we were not obliged to learn a new language. And Thomas Hardy wrote as interestingly about Wessex as ever Pierre Loti did about Japan or Morocco.

We wrote to my cousin, Lil Turner-Turner, and asked her advice. She had led a really adventurous life since the days when we played together in Portrush. She had shot bears in the Rocky Mountains, caught salmon in New

Zealand rivers and tarpons off the Bahamas. She had then retired, though not for long, to lead a quiet life in Hampshire. She at once advised us to take a house in Beaulieu. This was kind and generous, for she lived there herself, and it is seldom pleasant to have relatives settled within easy visiting distance. She did more than advise, she found a house for us, just the sort of house we wanted, neither poky nor too large, and situated most charmingly on the shores of Beaulieu River, close to a fascinating hamlet called Buckler's Hard. There we settled down and enjoyed ourselves so much that we stayed there for nine months, instead of the six we had planned.

But Beaulieu was not the place in which to study Hardy's rural England. Lord Montagu, to whom the whole district belonged, was developing his estate. He encouraged people to build houses, of the superior suburban-villa type, and these were built, comfortable habitations, with comfortable people in them. We found ourselves in the midst of a very agreeable little society, and made friends with people who were quite ready to make friends with us. We were just far enough from the village to be safe from the curse of excessive sociability and could be alone as much as we liked, to us a blessed privilege. The Rector, Mr. Powles, liked to regard himself as the successor of the Abbots of Beaulieu. He became a friend of ours and I used to help him on Sundays. Otherwise I had no work to do, except my writing, and I did not do very much of that.

Motors were still rare in those days and I am so helpless with machines of any kind that I did not want to start a car unless I could afford to pay a first-rate chauffeur to look after it. We had a little pony trap in which we used

to drive about, but a good many of our expeditions were done on foot and on bicycles. The house was a most comfortable one, surrounded by woods, through which we wandered when spring came, to Ada's great delight. All sorts of things which interested her grew there, and there were many birds. The lawn at the back of the house sloped down to the river, which was tidal. We had our own bathing house at the end of the lawn and our own hard for landing from boats. During the winter and early spring I had only a rowing boat, but when the weather got fine I hired a sailing boat from Lord Montagu and kept her moored off our hard. She was a pretty boat to look at and very fast, but most unsafe. Once she actually sank at her moorings and we had great difficulty in getting her afloat again. For all that we had good fun in that boat. We never ventured very far, but we managed to sail up Southampton Water, the Hamble river, and to visit most parts of the northern coast of the Isle of Wight.

From time to time Irish friends came to visit us. Horace Plunkett came. So did Lord Monteagle and his daughter, Mary. Cathleen Nesbitt, who had acted in my play, spent a week with us. Years afterwards I met her at a wedding and she told me a story about her first visit to Beaulieu which I had not heard before. Ada and I were not in the house when she arrived. She was received, with hospitable welcome, by our youngest child, Seumas, then about eight years old. "Mother and Father are out," he said, "but if you like I'll play you Chopin's Funeral March." And this he did with the help of a mechanical piano-player, which he pedalled vigorously. In return for that story I told her another. Miss Nesbitt, not yet a famous actress, was anxious to obtain a part in my *General John Regan*. She

wrote to me enclosing a large photograph. Knowing no other address she sent the letter to St. Patrick's Cathedral. When I went into the clergy's robing room one Sunday afternoon the letter was lying on the table. Dean Inge was our preacher that day and there was a large gathering of canons, including the Archbishop of Dublin. I cut the string of my parcel and uncovered a photograph of a charming young lady with very little on her. (She had been taken as Perdita, who, apparently, wore only a single garment.) Our canons, including the Archbishop, who was one of them, discreetly turned their backs. I shuffled the photograph back into its paper. But it was no use attempting any explanation. My reputation for clerical decorum was gone.

My cousin Walter, who came home from America every year, stayed with us for a while, and, of course, we saw a good deal of his sister, Mrs. Turner-Turner. Life was quiet, but never dull. It was delightfully peaceful after all our struggles in Ireland.

Our eldest girl, Theo, left the Alexandra College and we sent her for a while to Paris, where she was supposed to learn French and did learn to dress herself, quite as useful a lesson. We arranged to fetch her home at the end of July, planning a tour through Belgium and part of Holland when we went to get her. But that tour never came off. We sat at dinner one warm evening on a verandah outside our house. We watched the sun set across the broad, winding river. Nothing could have been more peaceful and beautiful. We decided that we should be fools to leave it all in order to wander about in dirty trains and sleep in stuffy hotels. We postponed our trip to Belgium until a more convenient season. We missed

our chance. Before that convenient season came our little world, which had been quietly happy, was shattered, as greater worlds than ours were, by the sudden disaster of the War.

I remember very well the staggering unexpectedness of its coming. At that time we were thinking and talking of nothing but Ireland. Lord Montagu, who used to spend most of each week in London, came home for Sundays and he told us a good deal of the inner gossip about the Buckingham Palace Conference, that final attempt at an Irish settlement. He brought us the first news of what we all decided to call "The Curragh Incident," hoping by this colourless language to save the faces of all concerned. We were so deeply interested in Ireland and Irish affairs that all this news thrilled us painfully, and we had no thought to give to Austria's dealings with Serbia. I remember very clearly the Sunday when Lord Montagu brought home the news of the landing of arms at Howth, an enterprise in which several friends of ours were concerned. He told us that news just before church and I think that never before had I so heartily made the petition, "Give peace in our time, oh Lord." Next day we had a letter from Robert, in which he wrote: "Nothing but a European conflagration can now save us from civil war." In the *Irish Times* office he was in a position to know what was going on, and even as a very young man he had a faculty, denied to me, of gripping the essentials of political situations and gauging their meanings. Then, as often afterwards, he was right. We were saved from civil war in Ireland in what he regarded as the only possible way.

Utterly unexpected by us was the coming of the greater disaster. So little did we guess the approach of the War

that we went off quite joyfully with Lord Montagu in his yacht to see the naval review at Spithead. We steamed round the enormous fleet looking at all the different kinds of vessels without the slightest idea that they were so soon to be used for their deadly work. Whether Lord Montagu knew anything about what was happening I do not know. If he did, he did not drop a hint to us or to any other member of the party. Next day he went out to the fleet again and took with him our two girls, Theo the elder being about eighteen years of age at the time. They were invited on board Admiral Beatty's ship, and given tea by him. They came back in great delight with an account of the tea which he had given them. Afterwards when his name became very famous it pleased them to think that they had once had tea with him in the cabin of his ship.

Like everybody else in England we were anxious to be of some use and were ready to help in any way we could. But civilian help was not warmly welcomed, a thing not to be wondered at when we remember the shape civilian help often took. In Beaulieu, for instance, we set a game-keeper with a gun to watch the source of our water-supply, being convinced that the Germans would put poison in it. I have heard since that Mells people wanted to do the same thing but were stopped by Sir John Horner, who almost alone in those days seems to have retained some common sense. It is scarcely surprising that the government frowned on civilian enthusiasm.

After a while I managed to secure some work. I went up to London every week and helped my sister-in-law, Miss Mabel Wynne, who was the head of a branch of the Charity Organisation Society. My job was to hunt out

the wives and dependants of the reservists, who had been called to the colours. I had to wander about slummy parts of Battersea discovering these women and making a card index of them and their children. Like most forms of work I have found in life this had streaks of pure comedy running through it, and it was interesting to me as my first introduction to the poor of English cities. I was kept busy during the weekdays and only went to Beaulieu for Sundays. Ada joined one of the innumerable working parties which were started at once, all over the country. She turned out to be a most useful member, for she was the only woman in the place who knew how to cut out pyjamas. She was always skilful in anything to do with needlework, and our years of poverty in Westport had taught her a good deal which better-off women had never learned. Before she took over the cutting out, those Beaulieu pyjamas were fearsome garments which no man could have worn. Perhaps they turned out useful for scrubbing the floors of some hospital.

There was one journey from London to Southampton during which my train, which was crowded, was run into sidings five or six times on the way down in order to allow troop trains, full of cheering soldiers, to get past us. I guessed as little as they did what the next few weeks were to bring them; but looking back on it now, it seems as if those excited cheers were the most pathetic sounds I ever heard.

On Saturday evenings and on Sundays we used to wander through the woods to the coast-guard station at the mouth of the river. There we could see the great steamers, which served as transports, anchored in Southampton Water. From time to time one of them

would steal away southwards into the dark, but the space left by the disappearing ships was always taken by others and the work of transporting the Expeditionary Force went on. There was one night when a violent thunderstorm broke over the south of England. For a long time there was no rain and we sat outside our house at Beaulieu listening to the distant peals of the thunder and watching the rapid flashes of lightning. Rumour at that time was busy with the idea that the German fleet would make a rush for the Channel while the Expeditionary Force was being ferried over to France. It seemed a likely enough thing for a daring admiral to attempt. When we listened to the thunderstorm it seemed to us that a naval battle must be going on. The night was pitch dark and I remember tramping off with Theo, my elder daughter, to the nearest point at which we could see the Solent. I came home still unconvinced that it was merely a thunderstorm.

My son Robert, still a leader-writer in the *Irish Times*, made his first attempt to volunteer for service almost immediately after war began. He had no military training outside his brief experience in an O.T.C. at school and had no taste for soldiering. On the other hand after his bringing up in the west of Ireland he did know something about the navigation of small ships. He also had a knowledge of parts of the west coast of Ireland. He volunteered for service in some kind of Yacht Patrol which came into existence at the beginning of the War. He was asked if he knew anything about the east or south coast of England. He replied, of course, that he knew nothing at all about the waters or the harbours and bays of those coasts; but that he did know something about parts of the

west coast of Ireland. This was a kind of knowledge which I imagine very few amateur sailors possessed, but the authorities did not think it likely to be of any use to them, so they turned him down. It did not seem likely then that German war vessels of any kind would ever be able to go near the west of Ireland, and it seemed a waste of energy to patrol those coasts. Afterwards we used to hear rumours of submarines making use of the bays like the Killary Bay in County Galway and islands like Innishboffin. Whether they actually did, I do not know, but even the possibility of their doing so would have made an intimate knowledge of those waters useful. But no one could have foreseen that.

Later, seeing no chance of naval service, Robert obtained a commission in the Irish Guards and joined up early in 1915. He remained in the second battalion of that regiment from the time they landed in France until he was wounded in Passchendaele, rejoining just in time to celebrate the Armistice.

In the early autumn of 1914 our tenancy of Sackville Cottage came to an end. We were offered the chance of buying the house, but this we did not do. We wanted to go back to Dublin. Robert was still there. Theo had just entered Dublin University, and Althea was at the Alexandra College, though she matriculated soon afterwards. There was a first-rate preparatory school called Castle Park, near Dublin, to which Seumas was sent. It seemed that Dublin or the neighbourhood was the natural place of residence for us. And, besides, I think we both wanted to go back to Ireland. We took a house called Mount Mapas, almost on the summit of Killiney Hill, about eight miles south of Dublin. It was a comfortable and con-

venient house and commanded a most beautiful view of Dublin Bay. But I think the years we spent there were not very happy ones. Before we had been there very long Robert obtained his commission and went to Warley for his training. Very soon he was sent out to France with his battalion. This, of course, meant continual anxiety for us, especially for Ada, who was always more inclined to fear the worst than I was.

Early in 1915 I went out to America on a second lecture tour. I travelled out on the *Baltic* with Ada's cousin, Benjamin Guinness. He and his wife had been very kind to us when we were in America two years before, and he invited me to treat his house in Washington Square as my headquarters during my second stay in America. He and I made the acquaintance of Mr. Sarolea on the steamer. Like me, Mr. Sarolea was going out to America to lecture. He had been sent by his own government to put the case of the Belgians before the American people in order to obtain sympathy for the Allied cause.

It was a very curious experience to go to America from war-excited England and scarcely less excited Ireland. In New York I found that people generally were in mild sympathy with the Allies, though, as I soon realised, they had no idea that they might be called upon to take any part in the struggle. When I went down to see my cousin Walter in Tennessee I found that people there were indifferent about the rights and wrongs of the business. Indeed they were scarcely interested. Remembering what the feeling had been in England when I left it I received a severe shock when I lectured one night to three or four hundred men students in one of the universities. After my lecture was over the whole body of these young men

stood up and sang a song, which I believe was very popular in America at the time. The words were supposed to be those of an American mother. They ran:

“I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier,
I raised him for a mother’s pride and joy,
Who dares to put a musket on his shoulder,
To shoot some other mother’s darling boy?
There’d be no war to-day, if mothers all would say,
I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier.”

I remember the feeling of sick disgust which crept over me when I heard those boys sing that song at the top of their voices. It seemed impossible that any young man could sing such stuff except in derision. I know better now. Since then an epidemic of pacifist sentimentalism has crept over England, and I daresay that the members of the Union in Oxford would sing a song of similar sentiment; but even they would, I hope, express their feelings in less egregious words. “Some other mother’s darling boy” would surely nauseate even a pacifist undergraduate in this country.

But even at that time and in the atmosphere in which I found myself, there was a good deal of fun to be got out of that trip. I lectured one evening at one of the Women’s Universities. I stayed the night with the president, who, oddly enough, was a man. After my lecture and after supper, he was called away. When he came back he told me that a deputation of his girl students had come to him with a request that I would say a few words to them after morning service in their chapel next day. I, of course, agreed to do so. I spent an hour after I went up

to my bedroom thinking out something which might be suitable for a crowd of young women before breakfast. Next morning the president and I walked together to the chapel. I gave him an outline of the little address I proposed to give. I saw by his face that he did not like it. After a pause he said to me, "But that's a sermon." I replied apologetically, that as it was only to last six or seven minutes it could scarcely be called a sermon. "But that isn't in the least what my students want," he said. I asked him what they did want and he told me: "A few minutes' talk about how it feels to be an author." I have seldom been more taken aback, but I did my best to rise to the occasion. While the girls sang a hymn or a psalm and recited the Lord's Prayer, I tried to put into coherent form the sensations of an author. When the prayers were finished I mounted the pulpit and described to five or six hundred smiling maidens what it felt like to have a book published. That was the first time I ever entered the pulpit of an American College Chapel. I determined that it should be the last.

It was during that stay in America that I came to know Theodore Roosevelt, though I had met him once at Sir Horace Plunkett's house near Dublin. When he heard that I was in New York he invited me to breakfast and afterwards to spend a few days with him at Oyster Bay. Something I had written about the ways of politicians attracted him and he told me that he had quoted the passage in one of his speeches. This high compliment filled me with delight. Oddly enough the same thing was said to me by an eminent English politician years afterwards, though what he quoted was a sermon. I was naturally curious and asked him what the sermon was

about. He gave me a very clear account of it, and it turned out not to be mine at all, but one which I once published as the very worst pulpit utterance I had ever heard. That took the sweetness out of the compliment, and I could only say that if he ever fathered that sermon on me again I should take an action for libel against him.

My voyage home was once more made on the *Lusitania*. At that time New York was full of rumours that the Germans were lying in wait for her off the Irish coast, intending to torpedo her. This, as everyone knows, they succeeded in doing on her next homeward voyage. Mine was the last eastward trip that she ever completed. I kept coming across those rumours in quite unexpected places. I had a little money to take home with me, the proceeds of my lectures. It was lodged at the Ladenburgh-Thalman Bank, of which Benjamin Guinness was, I think, one of the directors. I applied to the cashier, who happened to be an Austrian, for a draft on some English bank to take home with me. He asked me on what ship I was sailing, and when I told him I was sailing on the *Lusitania* he begged me with tears in his eyes to cancel my passage and sail on an American ship. At that time it was supposed that the Germans would not venture to touch American ships, and the faith of the Americans in the inviolability of the Stars and Stripes was touching. American ladies making the Atlantic crossing used to wave little flags over the bulwarks when their steamer entered dangerous water.

I refused to change my ship. I had booked my passage and in any case I was not going to be hustled off an English ship by what sounded like hysterical tales of German submarines. There was also at that time a German cruiser

in one of the North American ports, and there were numerous rumours as to what she would do when she came out. It was generally supposed that she would lie in wait for the *Lusitania* and attack her. As a matter of fact, she exhausted the days of grace allowed her in a neutral port, and remained there interned until the end of the War. We need not have been afraid of her.

When I embarked I found that the passengers were all agog with stories of the perils which awaited us. One or two, but I am glad to say only one or two, had taken the advice given me by the bank cashier and cancelled their passages, sailing a day later on an American steamer.

It happened that when we embarked there was a violent blizzard going on. The air was thick with snow and the ship which ought to have sailed that day put off her start until early next morning. The result of this was that we received copies of that day's New York evening papers, and to our great delight saw the headlines describing our departure. One of them I remember ran: "Three hundred pale passengers face submarine peril." The alliteration was neat, but I do not remember that any one of us was pallid, until later on, when sea-sickness affected complexions which terror had not blanched.

Very soon after embarking I came across Lord Castlemaine, an Irish friend. He introduced me to Lady Ross and to Madame Vandervelde, the wife of the Belgian Socialist statesman. We agreed to play bridge together during the voyage, but unfortunately the weather was too much for Madame Vandervelde. She collapsed at the beginning of the voyage and never appeared again until we landed at Liverpool. This left us one short for our bridge party and Lord Castlemaine had to search the ship

for a fourth player. Both he and Lady Ross were very good players, and I think everyone was a little nervous of joining the party. If they had known how bad I was, they would have had more courage. I found myself constantly apologising for my play and I would gladly have given my place to someone else; but Lord Castlemaine and Lady Ross were very patient and bore my blundering with the utmost good temper.

The *Lusitania* sailed very early on the morning of Easter Sunday. On these ships it is the custom to hold a morning service on Sundays, conducted by the captain. Seeing that that Sunday was Easter, and the conditions of our voyage peculiar, I thought that we ought to have an early celebration of the Holy Communion as well. I suggested this, and at once obtained the permission I asked. There were no proper arrangements for such a service on the ship. I held it in the smoking-room, with a bottom of a butter dish for a Patten and a champagne glass for a Chalice. There was a very large congregation. The people knelt round the little tables in the smoking-room, and as there were no Altar Rails to which they could come, I went round among them at the time of the people's communion. I think that everyone, though not frightened, was aware of the risk we were running and was in a serious mood.

Three consecutive Easter Sundays of 1914-1915-1916 found me celebrating the Holy Communion at three strangely different places. In 1914 I celebrated in the ancient church at Beaulieu, which had once been the Refectory of the Abbey. In 1915 I celebrated on the *Lusitania* in the luxurious smoking-room of that great ship. In 1916 I celebrated in a hut belonging to the Y.M.C.A. at five o'clock in the morning without any pomp

and with the plainest ritual, but with rows and rows of young soldiers kneeling on the bare floor. They had been confirmed a few days before by the Bishop of Northern and Central Europe.

As we neared the Irish coast there was a certain nervousness among the passengers, increased, I think, by a rather emotional ship's concert, at which a French actress burst into floods of tears while reciting the "Marseillaise." The nervousness took us in various ways. Lord Castlemaine, almost alone, was totally unaffected. Lady Ross confessed that before going to bed every night she changed her dinner dress for day clothes and slept in them. She said she did not mind being torpedoed, but she did object to having to get on to a raft in the middle of the night in her nightgown. Nervousness took me in the form of a dread of being shut up. I thought that a torpedo striking the ship might jam the door of my cabin and that I should not be able to get out. In spite of the protests of my steward I insisted on sleeping with my door wide open. I even, such was the strength of my fear, declined to have the door of the bathroom shut while I was inside in the morning. There was on the *Lusitania* one passenger, I think a Jew, who displayed genuine terror. Some of the younger passengers took a delight in telling him horrible stories, all quite imaginary, of what happened when a ship was torpedoed. On the last night, when we were steaming up St. George's Channel, this man broke down completely. He went round begging someone to sit up with him during the night, saying that he was afraid to go to bed. At first no one would, but at last one young man, who was returning from Canada to serve in some regiment, volunteered to sit up with him. Next morning when we arrived at

Liverpool Lord Castlemaine and I came across this young man looking extremely unhappy. When we talked to him he confessed that the Jew had insisted on playing cards during the night and had won all his money. I think that was the meanest return for a kindness I have ever heard of in my life. It was also a fine example of "ruling passion strong," in the face of death.

We landed at Liverpool on a Sunday morning. There was some difficulty about getting off the ship because there were no custom-house officers to examine our luggage. I was most unwilling to delay my arrival at home and while I walked about the deck I came across a Belfast man who was as eager as I to get away. I do not know how he managed it, but he and I did succeed in getting off though everyone else was delayed. I caught the mailboat from Holyhead and arrived at Kingstown to be met by Ada, my two girls, and a nephew, Wilfred Wynne, who was already wearing uniform and waiting to be sent to France.

CHAPTER XI

WE continued to occupy that house at Killiney until a few months before the end of the War. But I was there with my family only part of the time. During the spring of 1915 I was lecturing in America. I returned to an Ireland strange to me. The country was sharply divided, more sharply and deeply than it had ever been before, between those who regarded the War as a just and righteous struggle against a threatened tyranny, and those who took the extreme Nationalist view that England's extremity was Ireland's opportunity, an opportunity which should be used to wrest from a distressed and harassed England, Ireland's right to manage her own affairs. It very soon became evident that these extreme Nationalists hoped for an English defeat and a German victory. It was inevitable that there should be an unbridgeable gulf between the two sections of nationalist Ireland. The position of the old-fashioned Conservative loyalist was plain enough. He was, and always had been, anti-Nationalist. His whole sympathies were with England in her trouble. But the position of men like myself was very different. Our recognition of the justice of the Allied cause meant for us the breaking of many old friendships. Here was no matter of a difference of opinion, where toleration and mutual respect might have saved the rupture of friendship. The thing went deeper. So strong were the feelings on both sides that even ordinary social intercourse became impossible. It was not a drifting apart. That happens

constantly in life. Interests and opinions change, but the outward semblance of old friendship can be maintained. This was something more. It was a sharp severance of relationships which had been pleasant and intimate. We felt, that though we had been friends, it was better for us to see each other no more. And we took care not to see each other. We could not meet on neutral ground, because there was no neutral ground. Therefore we did not meet at all.

To me it seemed perfectly clear that England was right and Nationalist Ireland wrong. I had no doubt or hesitation and this was fortunate for me. By the time I returned from America the position had hardened. There was a short period during which Nationalist opinion wavered uncertainly. It was just possible that John Redmond's effect to secure Irish sympathy for the Allies might have succeeded. He had promised it and his promise had been hailed by English statesmen as "the one bright spot" in a gloomy world. It was not Redmond's fault that he failed to make good his promise. The chance was lost, mainly through the stupidity and mismanagement of the English War Office. I was not in Ireland during the period of indecision. When I got back the ranging of the two sides was complete.

Almost immediately after my return from America I asked for a commission as chaplain. My first wish was to serve with the navy, but there were difficulties about that. I think I was regarded as too old. I daresay that the army would have refused me on the same plea, but I was fortunate in being backed by Lord Wimborne, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. I was one of his chaplains, and when I expressed a wish to serve with the forces he



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supported my application, and I not only received a commission, but was sent straight out to France.

An enormous literature has gathered round the War. Strategy, tactics and weapons have been discussed from every point of view. The human side of it—the struggle in its effect on the men engaged in it—has also been discussed in almost innumerable books, but chiefly from the point of view of neurotic and over-sensitive men who ought never to have been in the War at all. This was inevitable. It is the nervy man who wants to write and does write. The normal man, better at doing things than analysing emotions, prefers to keep his experiences to himself. Perhaps he suffered less than the sensitive during the War. He has certainly caused less suffering to other people ever since.

I feel justified in making this criticism of war-experience books, because I wrote one myself—a short account of what I saw as a chaplain, called *A Padre in France*. No one wants to read such a book now, but I should like to quote one passage from it, a passage which expressed what my feelings then were, and still are.

“I was never in the fighting line. I think that my superior officers thought that my age forbade me going there, although, looking back on it now, I feel that I was then a young man. During the whole period of my service I was kept at work at one base or another. Except for air raids I was never in any personal danger. The result of all this was that I saw what I suppose was the seamiest side of the War.

“I never had the chance of seeing the gallantry of the men who attacked or the courageous tenacity of those who defended. I missed all the excitement. I experienced none

of those hours of terror which I have heard described, and never saw how finely man's will can triumph over terror. I had no chance of knowing that great comradeship which grows up among those who suffer greatly together. War, seen at the front, is hell. I hardly ever met anyone who doubted that. But it is a hell inhabited not by devils, but by heroes; and human nature rises to unimaginable heights when it is subject to the awful strain of war. It is no wonder that those who have lived with our fighting army are filled with admiration for the men, are prepared to bless altogether, not war which we all hate, but the men who wage it.

"The case is very different behind the lines. There, indeed, we saw the sordid side of the War. There are the men who in some way or other have secured and kept safe jobs, the *embusqués* whom the French papers constantly denounce. There are the officers who have failed, proved unfit for command, shown themselves lacking in courage, perhaps, and in mercy have been sent down to some safe base. There are the men who have been broken in spirit as well as in body, who drag on an existence utterly dull, very toilsome, well-nigh hopeless, illuminated by no high call for heroic deeds. There the observer sees whatever there is to be seen of petty spite and jealousy, the manipulating of jobs, the dodging of regulations and all that is most ignoble in the soldier's trade. There are also the men with grievances, who, in their own estimation, are fit for posts quite other than those they hold. Someone has described war at the front as an affair of months of boredom punctuated by moments of terror. If that philosopher had been stationed at a base he might have halved his epigram and described war as

months of boredom unpunctuated even by terror.

"Yet even behind the lines, in the remotest places, that which moves our admiration far outdoes what is sordid and mean. We still bless, not war, but soldiers. We forget the failures of man in joyful contemplation of his achievements.

"Here are the great hospitals, where suffering men succeeded each other day after day, so that we seemed to see a mist of pain rising like ceaseless clouds of incense smoke for the nostrils of an abominable Moloch with a thirst for human blood. A man, though long inured to things, may curse the Moloch, but he will bless the sufferers who form the sacrifice. Their patience, their silent heroism, are beyond our praise.

"Here are huge cemeteries, long lines of graves, where every morning some are laid to rest, with reverence indeed, but with scant measure of the ritual pomp with which men are wont to pay their final honour to their dead. They have died, not in a moment amid the roar of battle, but after long bearing of pain. They have been lonely, with the time indeed for last farewells, but none greatly loved to whom to say them. Yet, standing above the lines of coffins, viewing the names and the numbers painted on the lids, our hearts are lifted up. We know how great it is to lay down life for others, and that for those who so die there must be immortality. The final wailing notes of the Last Post voice our feelings: 'Good night. Good-bye. See you again soon.'

"Here, among many less worthy, are men who are steadily doing, without much hope of praise, things intolerably monotonous, doing them day after day for years inspired by what Ruskin calls 'The Unvexed Instinct of

Duty.' Often these are old men, too old for field command. They have spent their lives in the army, have learned, have worked, have waited in the hope that some day their chance would come. Soldiers by profession and desire, they have looked for the great opportunity which the War they foresaw would give. The War came and the opportunity, but came too late for them. They can look for nothing but the dull duties of the base. They do them, enduring minor hardships, facing ceaseless worries, going calmly on, while the War in which they hoped to take their part is fought by others. With them are younger men, who have seen some fighting, have been wounded or broken in health. Often they have struggled hard to secure the posts they hold. They might have gone home. They counted it a desirable thing to be employed still, since actual fighting was impossible, somewhere in touch with fighting men.

"I wonder how much Balaam divined of the greatness which, no doubt, was in 'the uttermost part' of the host when the King of Moab showed it to him. I suppose he understood something of it, for once again, to the indignation of Balak, he blessed instead of cursing. I am sure that anyone who has lived long enough among men at our bases will feel as I do, that his pride in what is great there far outweighs his disappointment at the other things he saw. I never saw the fighting or the actual front, but even if I had seen nothing else but the fighting I could scarcely feel greater admiration for our officers and men or more love for them."

Years after the War was over, in 1931, Robert wrote to me from his office in Dallas, "I have lived through a war and a period of commercial depression and I am convinced

that the depression is the worse evil of the two." The saying interested me. I had not seen, as he had, the worst of the War. In my sheltered position I had not felt the full misery of the years of depression. I wanted to know whether other people agreed with Robert. I quoted his saying one night in a speech I made at a dinner given to soldiers, Coldstream Guardsmen, who had left the army for civilian life. It was received with a deep mutter of sincere agreement. I quoted it again at another dinner to a neighbour, a very charming lady, and an enthusiastic pacifist. She emitted a little shriek of horror and looked at me with an expression which suggested that I had committed the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the League of Nations. Yet Robert and the Coldstreamers knew much more than she did both about war and commercial depression. The one had scarcely touched her. The other she had not felt at all, being one of those unfortunates who need neither toil nor spin.

I am inclined to think that they were right and she was wrong. The amount of human misery is perhaps about equal. Is the grief of a woman whose husband is shot dead in a battle any greater than that of a husband who sees a delicate wife dying because he cannot by any means manage to earn the money to buy the food which would keep her alive? I do not suppose there is much to choose between the two. But the one brings to light all the best there is in man and even seems to create fineness where no one would guess that fineness could be. The widespread poverty which comes with commercial depression emphasises all the selfishness, meanness and greed in the worst of us and gives little opportunity for the heroism of heroic souls.

There were just two of my war experiences which seem worth while recording here; not because they are exciting or even very interesting, but because few others shared them and it is extremely unlikely that there is any record of them anywhere else. The first is concerned with a piece of work done in the great camp at Harfleur, just outside Le Havre. It was interesting work, and there must be very few who knew anything about it. My own share in it was small compared to that of others, but I was in a position to see what was done.

"Y.S.C." stands for Young Soldiers' Club, an institution which had a short but, I think, really useful existence in the large camp where I was first stationed. There were in that camp large numbers of boys—at one time nearly a thousand of them—all enlisted under age in the early days of the recruiting movement, all of them found by actual trial or judged beforehand to be unfit for the hardship of life in the trenches. They were either sent down from their battalions to the base or were stopped on the way up. For some time their number steadily increased. Like the children of Israel in Egypt, who also multiplied rapidly, they became a nuisance to the authorities.

Their existence in the camp was a standing menace to discipline. Officially they were men to be trained, fed, lodged, if necessary to be punished according to the plan designed for and in the main suitable to men. In reality they were boys, growing boys, some of them not sixteen years of age, a few—the thing seems almost incredible—not fifteen. How the recruiting authorities at home ever managed to send children of less than fifteen out to France as fighting men remains a mystery. But they did.

These were, besides, boys of a particularly difficult kind. It is not your "good" boy who rushes to the recruiting office and tells a lie about his age. It is not the gentle, amiable, well-mannered boy who is so enthusiastic for adventure that he will leave his home and endure the hardships of a soldier's life for the sake of seeing fighting. These boys were for the most part young scamps, and some of them had the qualities of the guttersnipe, but they had the making of men in them if properly treated.

The difficulty was to know how to treat them. No humane C.O. wants to condemn a mischievous brat of a boy to field punishment No. 1. Most C.O.s, even most sergeants, know that punishment of that kind, however necessary for a hardened evildoer of mature years, is totally unsuitable for a boy. At the same time if any sort of discipline is to be preserved, a boy, who must officially be regarded as a man, cannot be allowed to cheek a sergeant or flatly to refuse to obey orders. That was the military difficulty.

The social and moral difficulty was, if anything, worse. Those boys were totally useless to the army where they were, stuck in a large camp. They were learning all sorts of evil and very little good. They were a nuisance to the N.C.O.s and men, among whom they lived, and were bullied accordingly. They were getting no education and no physical training. They were in a straight way to be ruined instead of made.

It was an Irish surgeon, Major McCabe, who realised the necessity for doing something for these boys and set about the task. He was a typical Irishman—in looks, manner and character, one of the most Irish men I have ever met. He had a wonderful talent for dealing with young animals.

The very first time I met him he took me to see a puppy; a large, rather savage-looking creature, which he kept in a stable outside the camp. One of the creature's four grandparents had been a wolf. McCabe hoped to make the puppy a useful member of society. "I am never happy," he said, "unless I have some young thing to train—dog, horse, anything. That's the reason I am so keen to do something for these boys."

McCabe had no easy job when he took up the cause of those boys. It was not that he had to struggle against active opposition. There was no active opposition. Everyone wanted to help. The authorities realised that something ought to be done. What he was up against was system, the fact that he and the boys and the authorities and everyone of us were parts of a machine and the wheels of the thing would only go round one way.

Trying to get anything of an exceptional kind done in the army is like floundering in a trench full of sticky mud—one is inclined sometimes to say sticky muddle—surrounded by dense entanglements of barbed red-tape. You track authority from place to place, finding always that the man you want, the ultimate person who can actually give the permission you require, lies just beyond. If you are enormously persistent, and, nose to scent, you hunt on for years, you find yourself at last back with the man from whom you started, having made a full circle of all the authorities there are. Then, if you like, you can start again.

Yet everyone wanted to help, and in the end something got done.

A scheme of physical training was arranged for the boys and they were placed under the charge of special sergeants.

Their names were registered. I think they were "plotted" into a diagram and exhibited in curves, which was not much use to them, but helped to soothe the nerves of the authorities. To the official mind anything is hallowed when it is reduced to curves. The boys underwent special medical examinations, were weighed and tested in various ways at regular intervals. Finally a club was established for them.

At that point the Y.M.C.A. came to our aid. It gave us the use of one of the best buildings in the camp. It was originally meant for an officers' club, but was never used for officers; chiefly, I think, because the Y.M.C.A. insisted on teetotalism in any building under their control, which did not suit the British officer. To our boys the Y.M.C.A. was very generous. The building was lighted, heated and furnished for us. We were supplied with a magic lantern, books, games, boxing-gloves, a piano, writing paper, everything we dared to ask for. Without the help of the Y.M.C.A. that club would never have come into existence. And the association deserves credit not only for generosity in material things, but for its liberal spirit. The club was not run according to Y.M.C.A. rules, and was an embarrassing changeling child in their nursery, just as it was a suspicious innovation under the military system.

We held an opening meeting, and Colonel Harrison—one of our most helpful friends—agreed to give the boys an address. I wonder if any club ever opened quite as that one did. In our eagerness to get to work we took possession of our club-house before it was ready for us. There was no light. There was little furniture. There was no organisation. We had very little in the way of settled plans. But we had boys, eight or nine hundred of them, about

double as many as the largest room in the building would hold.

They were marched down from their various camps by sergeants. For the most part they arrived about an hour before the proper time. The sergeants, quite reasonably, considered that their responsibility ended when the boys passed through the doors of the club. The boys took the view that at that moment their opportunity began. They rioted. Every window in the place was shattered, everything else breakable—fortunately there was not much—was smashed into small bits. The tumult became so terrific that an officer of high standing and importance, whose offices were in the neighbourhood, sent an orderly to us with threats. It was one of the occasions on which it is good to be an Irishman. McCabe and I had been accustomed to riots all our lives, and minded them less than other people did. We knew—this is a fact which Englishmen find it hard to grasp—that cheerful rioters seldom mean to do any serious mischief.

It was one of our fixed principles, almost the only fixed principle we had at first, that the club was to be run by moral influence, not by means of orders and threats, or by military discipline. Our loyalty to principle was never more highly tried than it was at that first meeting. It is impossible to bring moral influence to bear effectively when you cannot make yourself heard and cannot move about. Yet, somehow, a kind of order was restored: and there was no uncertainty about the cheers with which Colonel Harrison was greeted when he entered the room. The boys in the other rooms, who could not see him, cheered frantically. The boys on the balcony, the boys standing in the window frames, all cheered. They asked

nothing better than to be allowed to go on cheering.

With the colonel were one or two other officers and a solitary lady, Miss Nettleton. I do not know even now how she got there, or why she came, but she was not half an hour in the room before we realised that she was the woman, the one woman in the whole world, for our job. Miss Nettleton was born to deal with wild boys. The fiercer they are the more she loved them, and the wickeder they are the more they loved her. But we had a struggle to get her. Oddly enough, she did not want to come to the club, being at that time deeply attached to some dock labourers among whom she worked in a slum near the quay. The Y.M.C.A.—she belonged to them—did not want to part with her. But we got her in the end, and she became mistress, mother, queen of the club.

Colonel Harrison's speech was a success, a thing which seemed beforehand almost beyond hope. He told these boys the naked truth about themselves, what they were, what they had been, and what they might be. They listened to him. I found out later on that those boys would listen to straight talk on almost any subject, even themselves. Also they would not listen to speech-making of the ordinary kind. I sometimes wonder what has happened now that they have become grown men and acquired votes. How have they dealt with the ordinary politician, who is never straight and always platitudinous? In those days they would not have stood him for ten minutes.

We had lectures three times a week, but not often on military subjects. We had lectures on morals, which were sometimes a little confusing. One lecturer, I remember, starting from the fact that the boys had mis-stated their ages to the recruiting officer when they enlisted, hammered

home the fact that all lies are disgraceful, and therefore they ought to be ashamed of themselves. Another told them that that lie was something of which they might be proud of all their lives. Which view they preferred I do not know. They cheered both lecturers with equal fervour.

The most remarkable and interesting lecture we ever had was given by one of our own members. He volunteered to give an account of his experience in the trenches. He cannot have been more than seventeen years of age, and ought never to have been in the trenches. He was undersized and, I should say, of poor physique. If the proper use of the letter "h" in conversation is any test of education, this boy must have had very little education. His vocabulary was limited, and many of the words he did use are not to be found in dictionaries. But he stood on the platform for half an hour and told us what he had seen, endured and felt, with a straightforward simplicity which was far more effective than any art. He disappeared from our midst soon afterwards, and I have never seen him since. I would give a good deal now to have a verbatim report of that lecture of his. It would really be a "human document."

I have written of the members of the Y.S.C. as boys. They were boys, but every now and then one turned out to be very much of a man in experience. There was one whom I came to know particularly well. He had been "up the line" and fought. He had been sent down because, at the age of seventeen, he could not stand the strain. I was present in our little military church when he was baptized, and on the same afternoon confirmed by Bishop Bury. I gave him his confirmation card and advised him to send it home to his mother for safety.

"I think, sir," he said, "that I would rather send it to my wife." He was a fellow citizen of mine, born and bred in Belfast. We Ulster men are forward and progressive people.

Alas for war friendships! Of all those with whom I was so intimately connected in working that club, there is not a single one with whom I am now in touch. Yet I would like to know where Miss Nettleton is, and Major McCabe, and *Colonel Harrison, and Major Hudson. I wonder if they remember me as clearly and affectionately as I remember them. One or two, but only one or two friends of that time, remain friends still. Yet once we were all very close together.

The other experience which few others shared with me was a horrible period of paralysing anxiety and terror. We heard the news of the Rebellion in Dublin in Easter week, 1916. That is to say we heard that it had happened. Then silence came down like a dense fog, lit only by occasional lurid rumours. We heard that Dublin was burned to the ground. We heard that it had been looted by rioters, that it was being shelled into ruins by artillery. We heard that Rebel armies were marching to Dublin from Wexford, from Mullingar and from elsewhere. Rumours grew wilder and wilder. No letters came to us. Telegrams remained unanswered. There was no way of getting news. Those of us who had wives and families in Dublin or the neighbourhood lived from day to day in miserable anxiety, haunted by visions of our homes burned and wrecked, of our nearest and dearest wandering cold and hungry through the country. There was nothing to reassure us

* Since this was written I have very gladly renewed my friendship with Colonel Harrison.

except official statements that "the situation is well in hand," and we all had sufficient war experience to put little faith in bulletins. It is odd that soldiers, the most straightforward and honest of men, cannot tell the truth in their public statements. It has always been so, I suppose. Scott said of a certain advertisement that it "lied like a bulletin," so the untruthfulness of soldiers had been proverbial a hundred years ago.

When at last the Censor removed his ban, letters from my family came to me in a flood, like water from a burst dam. I learned to my immense relief that I need not have been so desperately anxious. They had not suffered even serious inconvenience. They had even, occasionally, enjoyed touches of comedy from which no tragedy ever entirely escapes.

It was pointed out to me long afterwards that my hair, which had been a brownish colour before I went to France, was white when I returned. I am convinced that it was the week of the Irish Rebellion which wrought the change.

In the summer of 1915 I was moved to Boulogne and there I was given a most interesting job. I became the Chaplain of three camps. One of them was inhabited by old soldiers, chiefly men of the original expeditionary force. They were unfit for further active service, through wounds or disease. I went into their reading-room, hoping to make friends with some of them. My first experience of them was discouraging. I was greeted with an emphatic declaration: "We want no bloody parsons here." My second camp was called "Base Detail," which sounds insulting to the people there, but was, in reality, quite inoffensive to anyone who knew the official army language. It was there that I met Miss Rosamund Leather. In her

canteen Althea afterwards served, and must have been one of the youngest workers who went to France.

The third camp was the most interesting. It was a large convalescent camp, capable of containing three thousand men, and often quite full. To it came men of every unit in the British Army, from New Zealanders to French Canadians. There they stayed for weeks, sometimes for months, after leaving hospital. It was possible to know the men, for they were not much occupied with drills and parades.

The commanding officer there was Colonel Campbell, who did all he could to help me in my work and to make life easy for me. The streams of men who passed through the camp, sometimes staying a couple of months, sometimes only a week, were very interesting. I think that during my time there I must have come into contact with men of every contingent of the British forces. They were often startlingly different from anything I expected to find among non-commissioned soldiers. There was a young Canadian who said to me: "*O passi graviora, dabit Deus his quoque finem.*" There was a sturdy and blasphemous Englishman, who first borrowed twopence from me and then asked me to witness his signature to a Stock Exchange transfer form, dealing with two thousand pounds in government securities. There was a Jew who offered to act as organist at my Sunday services. There was a South African who beat me utterly in game after game of chess—and I thought I could play a little. There was a tattered and appallingly muddy youth, who came straight to us from the Somme battle and asked me to post a letter for him to his mother. I warned him that I must read it before I posted it. He had

no objection to my doing that. It contained his thanks for a copy of *Herodotus* sent out to him. There was a French Canadian, speaking the language of Montaigne, who wanted to marry a V.A.D. and thought I could arrange the matter for him. There must have been some misunderstanding, perhaps owing to the language, for the V.A.D. had not the slightest desire to marry him. There was even a Russian, though how he got there I do not know, who was a devout worshipper at every service I held, and this was all the more creditable to him since he did not know a word of English.

I left that camp with deep regret when my period of service was over and I was obliged to return home. I cherish among my dearest possessions two silver cups given me by the permanent staff of the camp and the officials of the Y.M.C.A.

I have said that war friendships, like those formed on steamers, do not endure. Perhaps this is not always so, and only happens to me because I am a bad friend-keeper. But two friends of that war period remain to me, to my deep satisfaction, in spite of the inevitable severance, following on close companionship, and the disappearance of all common interests. Miss Rosamund Leather remains a friend, nor has the ceasing of her war service diminished in the least my admiration for the devotion of her life. And Eardly Michell is still a friend. He and I went out to France together and served together as chaplains in Havre. He had a little more experience than I had, for he had worked in a camp in England. At first he was my mentor and guide, always he was a helpful friend.

CHAPTER XII

LIKE many another, I returned from the War a sick man. There was no glory or romance about it. I was not wounded or gassed. I did not even suffer from shell-shock or a nervous breakdown. With me it was simply and most prosaically stomach. I suffered almost constant pain. It was not severe, but it was very unpleasant and I was afraid to eat because when I did the pain got worse. This went on for about four years and I got tired of it.

Various doctors tried to cure me and all failed. I do not in the least blame them. They never had a fair chance, for I always told them before they examined me that it would be no use their recommending an abdominal operation. I was determined not to submit to that. I also said that I particularly disliked taking medicine. The wonder was that these doctors consented to treat me at all, but they did, though the only weapon left in their armoury was diet. Perhaps in their hearts they agreed with me about the value of the usual remedies. Doctors, I fancy, seldom deceive themselves. With medical advice I tried various schemes of diet. Ada, who was determined to get me well again if she could, saw to it that I kept to them. Indeed, lest I should be tempted above what I could bear by the sight of pleasant food, she kept herself and her household rigidly to the diet recommended to me. My children complained afterwards that there were times when they got nothing to eat but water biscuits. That was an exaggeration, but they were certainly deprived of things

they liked for no reason except that I liked them too.

The result of four years' continual dieting was that I lost nearly three stone in weight and the pains remained much as they were at the start. It was a dreary business and I began to despond.

Then I got perfectly well, so well that I could eat things like lobster and whipped cream without a suggestion of a pain afterwards.

Health and cure of diseases are so interesting to most people that I need scarcely apologise for stating briefly how I came to get well. Unfortunately, there is some difference of opinion about this. Ada always held that I was cured by having six teeth pulled out, all at once. It was and still is to some extent a fashionable theory that bad teeth cause disease. But my teeth were perfectly good when I first took to having pains and only decayed afterwards. So I do not think it can have been teeth with me.

I got well when we went to Dinard, and at Dinard the tide goes out for a considerable distance, leaving behind it enormous stretches of damp sand. My theory is that the sea contains something—the word ozone has gone out of fashion—which is very good for the human body. This gas, if it is a gas, gets into the air and we breathe it. It comes most abundantly, not from the sea itself, but from sea-soaked land. Therefore, the more sea-soaked land there is left by a receding tide, the more health-giving is the air which passes over it. That is the theory. I have never met anyone who believed it; but the facts are plain. At Dinard the tide goes out for miles and as soon as I went to Dinard I got well. There may be no connection between the two, but if I ever get ill again in that particular way I shall, if I can, go to Mont St. Michel and take rooms in an hotel for

a couple of months. At Mont St. Michel the tide goes out even farther than it does at Dinard and for hours every day the little town is entirely surrounded with stretches of damp sand. There are, I believe, places with higher and lower tides than the coast of Brittany, but they all seem to be a long way off. Mont St. Michel is easily accessible.

It is, of course, possible that my pains simply got well of themselves, as most ills do if left alone long enough. But that would be a dull thing to believe. I much prefer something a little more picturesque, like the flow and ebb of a tide.

When I came home from France I was restless, as well as sick. I wanted a parish again and a church of my own. When I have a parish—as during those long years at Westport—I chafe and fret at the tie, murmur because I am not free to go where I like and when I like. But when I break loose and am free I am restless, missing my bonds. This is no peculiarity of mine. Most men, I fancy, suffer in the same way. Wordsworth certainly did:

“Me this unchartered freedom tires,
I feel the weight of chance desires.”

Early in 1918 I got what I wanted. It was a very small parish. I had not at the most one hundred and fifty parishioners. But I should, at that time, have been afraid to take a bigger parish even if it had been offered me. My miserable pains worried me and I did not think that I was ever going to get well again.

Carnalway—that was the name of the parish—was in County Kildare, about eight miles from the Curragh,

where at that time there was a large garrison. There was no village in the parish and no shop of any kind. There was not even a post-office. There was one pillar-box, into which we used to drop our letters. If we ran short of stamps we dropped the necessary pennies into the box along with our letters, and the postman who emptied the box stamped the letters. It is a proof of the honesty of the people concerned, that there were always enough pennies for the unstamped letters and that the postman never failed to provide the stamps.

Carnalway, and indeed all that part of Kildare, was devoted to the cult of the horse. Everyone was interested in hunting and racing. Mr. Percy La Touche, of Harristown, was a steward of the Jockey Club, and one of the chief figures in the Irish racing world. Major Talbot Ponsonby, of Newberry, was the Master of the Kildare hounds. Captain Firth, one of our nearest neighbours, was a well-known steeplechase rider. On the occasion of the annual Punchestown races, held not far from Carnalway, all schools were given a holiday. Work of every kind ceased and the neighbourhood received a general clean-up. Gardens were tidied, broken windows mended, gates and railings were given a coat of paint. In Westport we used to clean up the town just before the pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick. Either way, whether for a steeplechase or a saint, the cleaning was done, and that, I suppose, was the chief thing.

I asked my Sunday school children one day why the people strewed branches on the road on Palm Sunday when our Lord was riding into Jerusalem. After a short pause for thought a small boy answered me: "Please, sir, it was to teach the ass to leap." I have often heard that

story, since I first told it myself, and the answer has been attributed to the children of many different places. I should like my Carnalway boy to have the credit of being the originator.

We were holding a choir practice in the church one afternoon. Everyone was there except our chief tenor. He was Mr. La Touche's chauffeur and had driven his master that day to an important race meeting at the Curragh. We were singing one of our hymns, when suddenly everybody, even the organist, stopped dead. All eyes turned towards the west door of the church. I looked round and saw our missing tenor enter. As he walked up the church towards the chancel he silently mouthed the words, "Snow Queen." "Snow Queen." That was the name of the winner of the principal race that day. I think that my organist and my choir must have put their money on Snow Queen. They sang with great vigour and cheerfulness after they heard, or lip-read, the announcement.

It might very well have been that we should have found ourselves out of place and uncomfortable in such a society. Althea, my youngest daughter, is the only one of my family who ever cared much about hunting or racing. Perhaps her enthusiasm, which amounts almost to a passion, made up for the deficiencies of her parents. Or perhaps the Kildare people had very large hearts. We were always at home and very happy among them.

Mr. Percy La Touche, the owner of Harristown and most of the parish, was not only a great sportsman. He had taken a leading part in public life, and known almost all the prominent men of his time in Ireland. He was also a man of wide reading and deep culture. I once asked him to give a lecture in our little schoolroom. I expected some-

thing about racing or hunting, but the only horses mentioned were those on Parthenon frieze. His subject was beauty, and part of the lecture consisted of an analysis of the beauty of Greek statuary. Percy La Touche remembered his Greek.

His wife, Lady Annette La Touche, was a lady whom we both soon learned to love. Almost alone in Co. Kildare she was uninterested in horses. Her passion was hens. She used the fine ballroom in Harristown as a place in which to cook and prepare their food. She went about in clothes a charwoman would have given away. But she used to make a state entry into church on Sundays. She walked up the whole length of the church, preceded by her companion carrying a cushion, and followed by a footman carrying an enormous Prayer Book. She always disliked my sermons and used to scold me about them. "You don't preach at all," she said. "All you do is just to stand up and talk to us. Why don't you preach?" I was not the only person she scolded. Lord Enniskillen, a constant visitor at Harristown, was pulled up regularly at afternoon tea for putting both butter and jam on the same piece of bread, a habit which Lady Annette thought wasteful. She must have been one of the last of the great ladies who maintained the old-fashioned discipline among her servants. A housemaid came to me one day to beg me to intercede for her with her ladyship. The girl had been dismissed because she went to church with a coloured ribbon in her hat. The odd thing was that she wanted to stay and was in tears over her dismissal. Yet that girl had enjoyed the rapturous freedom of a munition factory during the War.

Lady Annette was old when I first knew her and soon became infirm. We used to take long walks through

Harristown demesne, along the lovely banks of the Liffey. Percy La Touche and I took it in turns to push her chair, which was pulled from the front by a footman. Ada and the companion walked one each side of her. It was the regal progress of a great lady.

I remember with pride that I, and I think I alone, danced with her at the ball given in Harristown to celebrate her golden wedding. It was a long time since I had danced, and still longer, I think, since she had, but we managed an old-fashioned slidy, slithery waltz, which pleased us both, though it must have looked odd to the spectators. Not very long after that ball Lady Annette died, to our great grief. Percy La Touche did not survive her long. Our lives were the poorer for their going. Something great and fine passed with them.

Percy La Touche left no successor. His heir, a nephew, did not care, or could not afford to live at Harristown. The house rapidly fell into decay. The beautiful gardens ran wild. Cattle grazed on what had once been lawns. Grass grew over the drives and the walk along the Liffey banks was choked with weeds. "Of a truth many houses great and fair shall be desolate." So the prophet said long ago about the land of Judah. He might have said it, with even more poignant grief, about Ireland, had he foreseen those latter days.

The loss of the La Touches made a great gap in the parish, as well as in our lives. They, their household and their dependants, formed an appreciable part of my parishioners. Soon there was another loss which was almost as serious. The Talbot-Ponsonbys left Ireland to live in Devonshire. Their large hunting establishment was broken up and their house was left empty. They had

been good and kind friends of ours since we first went to Carnalway, and their children Marion and Jack were constantly at the Rectory playing with our youngest boy, Seumas. We felt lonely when they left us.

The number of my parishioners, never very great, dwindled sadly with the closing of these two houses and the breaking up of their establishments. It seemed wiser and better that what was left of the parish should be joined with another and we made up our minds to leave. Most of what made Carnalway pleasant and interesting had gone and I had very little clerical work to do. Life also had become very difficult and uncomfortable from quite another cause. The terrorist policy of the Sinn Fein party was developing all over the country. Outrage succeeded outrage. The news of murders, sometimes of our friends, reached us constantly. Post-offices were raided, until all small offices were closed and we had to go eight miles to buy a postal-order or to send a telegram. Roads were rendered impassable by trenches dug across them and by the felling of trees. Motoring, even where it was possible, was rendered difficult by the necessity of obtaining a police permit for even a short drive. Private cars were stolen, disabled and occasionally burnt. There was a strict censorship of letters, carried out not by what was still called "the government" (the name was derisory) but by the Sinn Feiners, who had their agents in every post-office. People who were so rash as to write letters to friends in England, giving accounts of the condition of the country, received threatening warnings that they had better leave Ireland at once. The same result followed things said in private houses. Most servants were spies and reported the conversations of their masters.

The irregular and only half-disciplined force with which the government tried to deal with the terror was almost as dangerous to peaceful people as the Sinn Fein gunmen. I was once very nearly shot by one of the so-called "Black and Tans." The man was in plain clothes and it was impossible for me to know that he had any authority, from either side, to hold up passing pedestrians. For all I knew to the contrary, he might have been an ordinary—non-political—bandit. He was, besides, in such a condition of nervous terror that the hand in which he held his revolver was shaking in a manner most alarming to me. Men in his position were in constant danger, even in the streets of Dublin, and naturally enough he was a good deal "rattled"; but that seemed, to me at least, an insufficient reason for his putting a bullet through my heart, which for a minute or two it seemed quite likely that he would do, either out of zeal or by accident. I was, when that man met me, walking along a Dublin street looking for a house at which I wanted to call. I had stupidly forgotten the number and the only way I could find the house I wanted was to knock at every door and enquire whether the man I was looking for lived there. It was a noticeable sign of the state of terror in which people lived, that though I knocked at more than twenty houses, only one person ventured to open the door, the others carried on conversations with me through the flaps of their letter-boxes.

All this made life difficult and unpleasant, although we were not ourselves molested or even threatened. I think that what finally forced us to go was my extreme indignation at the treatment of a young man who was in my employment as chauffeur. One morning he showed me a letter which warned him to leave the country within

twenty-four hours, unless he wanted to be shot. I do not know why he was regarded as objectionable. His only discernible offence against the Irish Republic was that he served in a Lancer regiment during the War. He was in Allenby's final campaign in Palestine. There must have been something else against him, but I never knew what it was.

I read the letter and then asked him what he was going to do. He replied that he would not run away, adding that he had not been afraid of the Turks during the War and was not going to be afraid of the Sinn Feiners afterwards. He was a plucky lad and he stayed for three weeks. Then he completely broke down and he confessed to me that he could not sleep at night (he lived with his father in a lonely house), because every time he heard a sound at night he thought "they" had come for him and would drag him from his bed and shoot him. A few weeks earlier, Archdeacon Finlay had been taken from his bed and shot, so we knew that these threats were no empty boasts. We got that lad away out of the country. I was, I remember, furiously angry.

Yet we left Carnalway with regret. It was a pleasant place and for a time we were happy there. It has been my singular good fortune in the three parishes I have held, to have three churches which it is easy to love. Westport Church was beautifully decorated and was rich in fine modern carving. Carnalway Church was very tiny, but very attractive. Except for the tower, which was older, it was built in the Hiberno-Romanesque style, being a copy of the ancient chapel of King Cormack, at Cashel. In Mells Church I found the realisation of my dreams, a building of rare beauty, rich in ancient memories, watched over by

a glorious tower. Few men have had such good fortune.

We were equally fortunate in the houses we were given to live in. All our three rectories were gracious houses, designed and built before the time when architects took to loving fussiness and gave way to the craving for unnecessary corners, which seems to have mastered them of late years. It is true that all three houses were too big for anyone to live in comfortably who had no more, or little more, than the income of the benefice. Much has been said with perfect justice about the unfairness of saddling the clergy with the expense of the upkeep of these houses. No doubt a large house is a great trouble to a man with a small income. But there is something to be said on the other side. The alternative to the fine old rectory is either a villa (suburban style) or a bungalow. Can a man housed in such a manner maintain undiminished his sense of personal dignity? Must he not sooner or later come to have a suburban or a bungalowish soul? If the alternative were a hermit's cell or even a two-roomed tenement in a slum the parish priest might accept it and keep his self-respect. But a villa! But a bungalow! Is even financial ease worth purchasing at such a price?

My departure from Carnalway severed, finally I suppose, my connection with the Church of Ireland into which I had been baptized, in which I was ordained. From then on my work was to be done in the freer, wider atmosphere of the Church of England. A friend of mine once likened the Church of Ireland to the "little sister" in the song of Solomon who had "no breasts." It is true, I think, that her life lacks that opulence, that "superb abundance" which is one of the glories of the English Church. But the Church of Ireland has done one thing for her children

which the Church of England has failed to do for hers. She has taught them to give. I sometimes wonder—and generally doubt—whether disestablishment and disendowment would find in Englishmen that enthusiastic liberality which Irishmen showed when the Church needed it. The smallest and poorest Irish parish raises—and makes no fuss about raising—an amount of money for Church purposes which puts wealthy English parishes to shame.

I love the Church of Ireland and have to thank her not only for my baptism and ordination but for such religion as I have. Yet I would not go back to her service now. I think the bonds with which she has tied herself would give me spiritual cramp.

CHAPTER XIII

AFTER leaving Carnalway we settled down for a year in Dinard. We had planned to go to France without fixing on any definite place. We decided on Dinard because Claude and Elsie Hannay lived there. We had stayed with them in America, we knew that they were people whom we should like. It turned out in every way to be a fortunate choice. It was Dinard, as I have explained, which made me well again, though we did not go there in pursuit of health. After three weeks of hunting we found an oddly planned but very delightful house called Villa de la Baie. It stood right over the sea, near the little harbour where the Vedettes Blanches land after coming from St. Malo. All noises of the street outside were shut away from us, for every room looked not towards the street but across the bay. At high tide, day and night, we heard the water surging beneath our windows, the most delightful sound there is. Low tides brought the romantic cries of sea birds seeking food on the wide stretches of uncovered sand. These were very different noises from the rifle shots and the crashing of falling trees which used to wake us up during our later nights at Carnalway.

Life in Dinard was very easy and very free. I do not know whether the French people fettered themselves with a DORA during the War, if they did they got rid of that abominable hag immediately afterwards. In a hundred ways one is less regimented, less "bossed about" in France than in England. It seems to me to be the only country

left in Europe which preserves a respect for individual liberty. Enthusiasts who want to set the world right, remoulding it to their heart's desire, not to mine, are far rarer in France than in England, and there are scarcely any societies which exist for the purpose of making us wise and good again our wills.

We secured at once a charming little French cook called Geneviève, who soon enticed into our service one Félicité, who was recommended to us as "une petite camarade à moi." These two maidens did everything for us, even our marketing, and if Geneviève pocketed a commission on every *poulet* she bought for us no one grudged it to her.

The house had wide balconies hanging over the sea from which we watched with never-ending delight the boats going up and down the Rance estuary, and the swinging flow of the strong tides. In the evenings we sat in rapturous wonder when the level rays of the setting sun painted the walls and spires of St. Malo with rich colours. Ada's happiness depended more than mine ever did on the beauty of her surroundings, on colour and sound. I think she was always happy at Villa de la Baie.

Four storeys up there was a kind of projecting greenhouse—what else am I to call a glass-roofed, glass-sided balcony?—to which I took my writing materials and a few chairs. Geneviève used to call it "le joli petit salon de monsieur." There we sat for many hours, Ada soaking herself in the beauty before her, I trying to pretend that I was writing.

There were a great many English people in Dinard, none of them rich, most of them elderly. The men had been soldiers, sailors, administrators, Indian civil servants. They had retired from the service of the Empire or had

been pushed out of it by rules of age-limit, with inadequate pensions. They could not have lived so comfortably in England as they did in France, where taxes in those days were light, and life much easier. They formed a pleasant society, much given to mild bridge, golf, tennis and the discussion of the rise and fall of the rate of exchange. As relatives of Claude and Elsie Hannay we were made welcome, although we played neither golf nor bridge. It was to us a curious experience to live among people who were completely and necessarily idle, having neither work which must nor self-imposed duties which ought to be done.

At first I used to help the English chaplain on Sundays, but after a while I opened a little chapel at St. Lunaire which was closed during the War and had not been reopened since. It was used chiefly by English residents at St. Briac and by visitors staying at the hotels there. I had as volunteer organist for a while Mrs. Tronson, a friend of our Carnalway days. She and her husband had given up their hunting and settled in St. Briac. She was a real musician and a very good pianist, but was not a success as a church organist. It was very kind of her to do the work at all and it was no fault of hers that she did not understand the nature of Anglican chants. My own impression is that church music and ordinary music are two entirely different things and the better the performer is at one the less likely he is to be any good at the other. But I have no right to express any opinion on such a subject.

Lord Sligo and several members of his family were at St. Lunaire for a while that summer and he used to read the lessons for me on Sundays. Thus, oddly enough, my

work in Brittany brought me into touch with friends from both my Irish parishes.

Two things happened in connection with that chapel which amused me at the time.

There was in St. Briac a little French inn where it was possible to obtain the most excellent food. The "patron" did the cooking himself, on a stove at one end of the dining-room. His wife and daughter were the waitresses. When I opened the little chapel in St. Lunaire this "patron" somehow got to hear of it. He called on all the English he knew and on a few English-speaking French people and insisted on their going to my church on Sunday morning. I asked him afterwards why he did it. It seemed unlikely that he was interested in the spiritual welfare of people whom he scarcely knew. His answer amazed me. "You have sent me so many clients," he said, "that I thought I ought to send you a few in return."

One morning Ada was waiting for me in the church porch after service. Two American ladies (quite obviously American) were talking there together. "Well," said one. "I am disappointed. I came all the way from St. Briac to hear him preach and his sermons are not nearly so funny as his books. I scarcely laughed at all." We parsons are always being told that it would be good for us to hear what our listeners think of our sermons. If this is true I ought to improve. This particular criticism pursues me. It turned up lately, otherwise worded, in the columns of the *Huddersfield Examiner*, after a sermon of mine had been broadcast by the B.B.C. I wonder if these people really expect jokes about the prophet Elijah or merriment over the beheading of John the Baptist.

It was in Dinard that I met again for the first time since

the War the Bishop of Northern and Central Europe, whose successor has been dubbed Bishop of Fulham, a much less appropriate title. I offered to help him in any way I could in the immensely scattered diocese of which he had charge. He at once asked me to go to Berlin to relieve the chaplain who was seriously ill. In Berlin we met several friends of other days and among them one who nearly got us into serious trouble. This was Dame Adelaide Livingstone, the daughter-in-law of Mrs. Livingstone of Belclare. She held a curious official position which I never really understood. It gave her the rank of a colonel, and her work, whatever it may have been, was evidently very important. She invited us to lunch at the Adlon Hotel and I told her that I was in trouble with the Berlin police. We had got into Germany without any visas on our passports. I know that this sounds incredible, but it is true. Our passports were examined again and again during the journey but no one noticed the lack of a visa until the police looked at them in Berlin. They took the view that we could not possibly have got into the country. I could only reply that we obviously had, because we were there, visible, even tangible if they liked to test our presence in that way. They continued saying that without visas we could not have crossed the frontier. I kept on saying that I must have crossed the frontier, because I was in Berlin, and it was no use saying I was not. Superior officers were sent for. Prolonged arguments continued. Tempers began to wear thin and at last a very official gentleman informed me fiercely that, if I was in Berlin, which he still doubted, I should certainly never get out again. This alarmed me, and seeking for advice I told the whole story to Dame Adelaide. In her important

position it seemed likely that she might be able to help us. She said she could and would. As we rose from the luncheon table I gave her our passports. She took them in her hand and immediately fainted, falling flat on the floor so suddenly that I had not time to stretch a hand out to save her. There was the sort of fuss usual on such occasions and Dame Adelaide was carried off to her room. Our passports completely disappeared.

Now it is bad enough to be stranded in a semi-hostile capital with deficient passports but much worse to have no passports at all. I began to wonder what the inside of a German prison was like. At last I did what I ought to have done when the police first threatened me. I asked for help at the British Embassy. It was ungrudgingly promised. Berlin was searched for our passports. They were found, perhaps in the office of the controller of the Municipal Libraries, if there is such a person, at all events in the keeping of someone quite as unlikely as that.

Besides rescuing us from our passport difficulties Lord and Lady D'Abernon were very kind to us while we were in Berlin, and we were often at the Embassy. One day while lunching there, I had an odd experience. The party was a large one and seemed to me very grand. I found myself, when I sat down at the table next to a very pretty lady, most beautifully dressed. I was greatly afraid of her, fearing that she might have been an Austrian Grand Duchess or a Polish Princess (if there is such a thing as a Polish Princess) or someone else who would haughtily snub me. I was trying to make up my mind whether I should address her in my ill-pronounced French or my halting German, when she turned to me with a pleasant smile and said in a soft Dublin voice: "How's Theo?" It

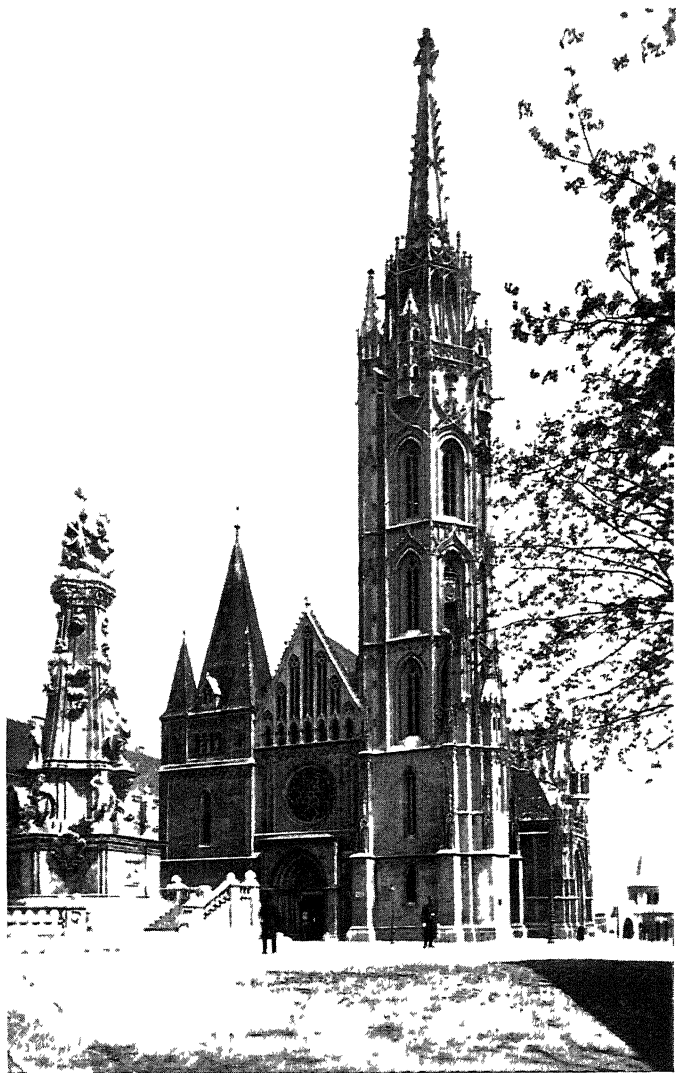
turned out that she had been a friend of my elder girl's in the University. They were fellow members of "the Elizabethan" when that society, using Theo as a spokesman, tried to induce Dr. Mahaffy, the Provost, to recognise smoking in the quadrangle as a legitimate amusement for girls. To what post of eminence she had risen in Berlin I do not know, but her appearance, clothes and manner would have made her eligible for a minor throne if such a thing had been vacant.

Berlin was then a very cheap place to live in for anybody with English money. That was before the final catastrophic crash of the mark, and prices had not risen much in terms of the depreciated mark. In terms of sterling they were very low indeed. We saw afterwards in Hungary and in Germany the appalling results which follow the utter collapse of a currency. But even in those days in Berlin there was desperate poverty among the salaried and "rentier" classes. As indeed there was among the working classes. I saw something of this poverty, for I had charge of two large confirmation classes attended chiefly by the children of English mothers married to Germans who had been repatriated during the War. I was painfully conscious that most of the children were insufficiently fed and almost all of them were too poorly clad to face the snow blizzards which swept over us at that time. Later on in Budapest and Leipzig, I was to see far worse poverty, all the more pitiful because it fell on people not accustomed to be poor.

Budapest was our next home after we left Dinard. It was Bishop Bury who sent us there. We met him at dinner one night in Dinard, and he said quite suddenly to me: "Would you like to go to Budapest?" I was very much

in the position of the schoolboy who wrote in his examination paper, "Budapest, sometimes called Bucharest, is a city in Asia Minor." I knew nothing about the place. I looked across the room to Ada and said: "The Bishop suggests that we should go to Budapest." Ada only asked one question. Would it be possible for Seumas (then at Winchester) to come to us there for his Christmas holidays? The Bishop said that could be managed easily. We agreed then and there to go to Budapest and do whatever work the Bishop had for us. It turned out that he wanted me to gather together the scattered remnants of the pre-War English colony and to restart the English Church. That sounded an interesting job.

Before the War there were a great many English people in Budapest and they were apparently devoted to their Church, supporting by their contributions a chaplain of their own. Some of them remained in Hungary all through the War and were better treated by the Hungarians than enemy aliens were anywhere else, certainly much better than the Hungarians would have been treated in England. When the War was over, Hungary became an independent republic (though it never agreed to the republic part of that arrangement) and an English Legation was established in Budapest. Mr. Hohler, afterwards Sir Thomas Hohler, was our first Minister. There was also a military mission under Colonel Selby and various other official people. These formed an entirely new element in the English society of the place, creating a sharp division between the new and the old English in Budapest. The new-comers, being paid in English money, got the full advantage of the favourable rate of exchange and were well off. The English whose homes were in Budapest shared with the



THE CORONATION CHURCH, BUDAPEST. FROM A PHOTO-
GRAPH SENT TO THE AUTHOR BY BISHOP NEMES

Hungarians the poverty which came with the depreciated money. The financial disparity made the division greater than it need have been and increased the difficulty of my work.

But every one, in both sections of society was ready to welcome us. Mr. Hohler wrote to me beforehand several times and arranged that I should be chaplain of the British Legation, a position of no emolument, but in every other way pleasant and most useful. It gave me some official position, a very great advantage in a country like Hungary. It secured for us certain diplomatic privileges and formed a kind of introduction to the upper-class Hungarians whom we might not have otherwise met. Mr. Bernard Sullivan, the Consul and afterwards our intimate friend, made all arrangements for our arrival, engaging rooms for us in the Gellert Hotel. And this cannot have been an easy thing, for someone started a rumour that we had twelve daughters and were bringing them all with us to Budapest, an alarming prospect for the Sullivans who were looking after us. He sent me beforehand a long document typed out in Magyar by a lady in his office, which franked all our luggage through the customs without the slightest examination. He told us afterwards that he had no right or authority to issue such a document nor did he expect it to produce any particular effect on the minds of the custom-house officials. I could not read a word of it, but I presented it to every official I saw and the result was that we were received with deep bows and our luggage waved through the barriers. I still have that document, and if I ever go to Hungary again—but I daresay it would not work now. In those days the Hungarians were depressed and cowed. They were prepared to accept any paper with an

English official stamp on it at more than its face value. Indeed during our whole stay in Hungary it was possible to do almost anything if you said *Angol Kovesek* (English Legation) in firm tones. I once broke open a municipal building, smashing the door to fragments and got off without any penalty by saying *Angol Kovesek* loudly and getting Bernard Sullivan to say it for me. I was, I think, quite justified in beating down that door. The caretaker of the building had gone away, locking the place up with my overcoat inside while I was engaged in conducting a funeral at some distance.

Our welcome to Budapest was almost embarrassingly warm. The Sullivans gave an afternoon reception in our honour, to which they invited every one of British nationality in the whole city, an exhausting affair both for them and for us. Mr. Hohler spent the greater part of a day in introducing me to Hungarian ministers of state, taking me from office to office, while my confusion of mind grew denser and my few words of German departed from me. Mr. Graepel, a manufacturer of agricultural machinery, welcomed us to his home and explained what the English Church in Budapest had been before the War, politely leaving it to me to settle what it was going to be in the future. But the oddest and most unexpected of all our welcomes came to us in the dining-room of the Hungaria Hotel, then, and probably now, the centre of social and official life. We went there to lunch one day soon after our arrival, expecting to slip quietly into some unobtrusive corner and eat a humble meal. Instead of that, we were received with obeisances, smiles and words of fervent welcome by the head waiter—I never called him anything but John—who descended from his high estate the moment

he saw us. We assumed that he had mistaken us for some Prince and Princess—a Hapsburg perhaps returning from exile. Deeply wondering, we were led up to the best table in the room and surrounded by obsequious waiters, while John fawned on us. I expected the mistake to be discovered at any moment and that we should have to take “with shame” a lower place. But there was no mistake. John’s welcome was meant for us. He told me afterwards that during the War he had been wounded and made prisoner. Somehow he had drifted into a French hospital. In it he found one English book, my *Spanish Gold*. He could read English but not French, so that story was his only resource during a long period of illness and convalescence. He had carried it off with him when the time for his release came. He still had it when I met him and he brought it to me to autograph for him. I should have imagined beforehand that an Irish story would make no appeal to a Hungarian waiter, but it is astonishing what dull things a man will read if he can get nothing else. I knew a sailor once, a profane man, who became intensely interested in the Rock of Horeb, because a tract bearing that name was the only printed matter in a ship in which he made a long voyage.

In my two Irish parishes—and now in Mells—I have been fortunate in having beautiful churches in which to worship. In Budapest I had no church at all. The English people had, before the War, collected a sum of money—about one thousand pounds—for the purpose of building a church. The Greek Church was at that time planning a new church, and had the money to build. It was arranged, so I was told, that a chapel should be added to the Greek church for the use of English people. The collapse of the Hungarian currency put an end to all such

schemes. The thousand pounds which the English had so patiently collected was worth two shillings and ninepence when I left Budapest and all thought of building had to be given up.

We secured, through Mr. Graepel, my churchwarden, the use of a large lecture hall in a Calvinist College for our Sunday services. It was always clean and very well heated, but there its virtues ended. It was the least inspiring building I have ever tried to pray in. Even the Y.M.C.A. huts in France were better than it. On what we chose to regard as the east wall hung four portraits of Calvinist Divines, no doubt eminent. They looked like provincial mayors recovering after civic dinners and there was no way of covering them up. There on Saturday afternoons we erected our little altar, which we stored away during the week. We decked it with flowers and candles and set our cross upon it. There Sunday after Sunday I celebrated the Lord's Supper and a little later on in the day said Mattins. The congregations were curiously mixed. One of my most regular communicants was the Austrian Ambassador, Count Calice, whose mother was an Englishwoman. Our Minister, Mr. Hohler, generally read the lessons. There was a steady attendance of about fifty or sixty English people and with them a "mixed multitude" of Hungarians of all faiths, some of them even Jews who came simply for the purpose of learning the English language, a thing which all Hungarians want to do.

Considered as a parish Hungary was large and scattered. I prepared for confirmation two girls, daughters of an English mother, who lived at a remote corner of Lake Balaton, half a day's journey by rail and steamer from Budapest.

I buried an English, or half-English, mining engineer at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains. The summons to this duty reached me on Sunday morning just as I was going to our Calvinist lecture hall. It was a telegram in Hungarian and I could not read a word of it. Mr. Graepel, my churchwarden, read it for me. I assumed that there must be some mistake about it. Why should the relatives of a man with an unmistakably Hungarian name want me to take a funeral service? Telegrams went to and fro and in the end it was plain that they really did want me. I started off very early next morning, the last day of the year, in the bitter cold and travelled for eight hours by train across the snow-covered plain of Hungary. Only once, for about an hour, had I a fellow passenger. At a wayside station a strangely attired sportsman got in. The snow was frozen on his leggings. He had three hares frozen stiff, slung across his shoulder, and a curious old-fashioned gun.

At about 2 p.m. I arrived at my destination and was met by a sleigh drawn by two horses. Long icicles hung from the moustache of the driver, making him look like a walrus. The priest of the parish—it was a Roman Catholic village—met me at the gate of the cemetery. He offered me the use of his church, his vestments, his sacristan, anything I wanted. To prevent any possible misunderstanding I explained that I was a priest of the English Church, which owing to some trouble between Queen Elizabeth and Philip of Spain a few hundred years ago was not in communion with the See of Rome. I do not think that he had ever heard of Elizabeth and Philip, but he had heard of the Malines Conversations and had no doubt that unity would soon be restored. Meanwhile there

were his church and his vestments entirely at my service. I did not want the vestments but I borrowed a violet pall and four huge candlesticks.

Round the grave stood forty or fifty miners, holding their safety lamps in their hands. At the corners of the grave were the four candles and the air was so still that the flames burned up without a flicker. Tiny feathers of snow fell. The temperature was four degrees below the Fahrenheit zero. I read the English funeral service surrounded by people who did not understand a word of it. Then the miners sang a Hungarian hymn. Finally they filed past the grave casting into it handfuls of snowy earth and calling as farewell the words which these miners say to each other as they go down into their pit at the beginning of their work.

Afterwards, while I drank tea *mit rum* in the hotel, the mystery of my summons was made clear. The man I had buried was the son of an Englishwoman. Forty years before, she had married a Hungarian and gone to live in that remote place. To the best of her ability she had brought her children up as members of the Church of England, and it was by her wish that I had been sent for and her son buried with the English rites.

I made my long journey back to Budapest and reached my hotel about a minute before midnight. As I climbed the stairs every light suddenly went out and there was a minute of complete silence. Then all the lights flared again and wild shrieks of revelry reached me from the dining-room. A wild young pig had been let loose to be pursued by yelling feasters, each anxious to pluck a bristle from its back, such bristles bringing infallible good luck for the New Year. Thus Ada in the dining-room and I on the

stairs welcomed the coming of 1924. She did not manage to secure a bristle, but the year brought us good luck without that.

There were many English people, chiefly women married to Hungarian husbands, scattered about in various parts of the country with whom I tried, not very successfully, to get into touch. Then, as if my parish was not big enough for one man, the whole of Czecho-Slovakia was placed under my care. Bishop Gore did that. He had come to Prague, at the suggestion of the Archbishop of Canterbury, to investigate an interesting religious movement which was going on there.

He came to Budapest to be the guest of the Hohlers at the Legation, partly because he had never seen the city and partly (again at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury) to report on a curious little scheme of the Church reunion in which I was most unwillingly mixed up. An American Bishop wrote to me that during the War the Hungarian Calvinists in his diocese had placed themselves under his care. They found their position much to their liking, and when the War was over they effected a union with the Anglican Church on terms which seemed to the Bishop satisfactory. They were evidently energetic and enthusiastic people, for they conceived the idea of persuading their brethren at home, chiefly in Transylvania, to unite in the same way with the English Church. They proposed with the help of the American Bishop to send a deputation to Budapest to work for the union. The Bishop asked me to receive the deputation and bless the effort.

I felt that I was scarcely in a position to conduct negotiations on behalf of the Church of England for such a

reunion. I wrote, enclosing a copy of the American Bishop's letter, to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. His Lordship of London took no notice whatever of the letter. I suppose he took the view that neither Transylvanian Calvinists nor the American Bishops mattered much. Certainly I did not matter at all. The Archbishop asked Bishop Gore to go to Budapest and look into the matter.

He did look into it. We had a conference with a Calvinist Bishop, who was rather a friend of mine. It surprised me at first—I think it also surprised Bishop Gore—to find that Calvinists have Bishops. Perhaps it is only in Hungary that they do. The Hungarians are very fond of Bishops and feel that religion is incomplete without them. Every self-respecting body runs one or two; though the Greek Church only goes as far as an Archimandrite, which is not quite the same thing. The Lutherans have a Bishop, a friendly man who once took my daughter Althea to a ball. The Calvinists have several. The Roman Catholics have far more than the normal number, owing to their peculiar relation to the State, though some are of a very inferior kind. My friend, Bishop Nemes, for instance, explained to me that he was not consecrated “in spiritualibus” but was otherwise entitled to and actually received all the glory which naturally belongs to that high office. What it came to was this. He was a Bishop according to Hungarian law, but was not quite a Bishop in the eyes of the Pope. He was in reality a Dean of the Coronation Church, but he used to wear the robes and enjoy the precedence of a Bishop.

Our conference with Bishop Ravacs, the Calvinist, was much more successful than conferences usually are, chiefly,

I think, because we could not understand each other very well. Bishop Ravacs spoke neither English nor French, Bishop Gore could not speak German or Hungarian. My Hungarian was negligible and my German unequal to dealing with delicate definitions of sacramental grace and the nicer points of the theory of apostolic succession. But it became quite clear at the outset that Bishop Ravacs did not want to have anything to do with the English Church and that Bishop Gore regarded the Calvinists as scarcely Christians. That was why I said our conference was a success. We settled definitely the thing we had come together to discuss, and hardly any other conference does that. If we could have understood each other we might and probably would have gone on discussing things for years and in the end "come out by the same door as that in we went." What happened about the American deputation I do not know. Perhaps Bishop Ravacs, warned in time, headed it off.

There was just one point on which Bishop Ravacs was prepared to meet us, if we would make any concession to him. Centuries ago some English society, either the S.P.G. or the S.P.C.K., made a grant to a Calvinist Theological College in Transylvania. The money was paid regularly, year by year, until the War made all sending of money into enemy countries impossible. Now that peace had come Bishop Ravacs wanted the grant restored. Bishop Gore was unable to make any promise. Yet there was a certain justice in the claim. Half a century before that grant was made, Prince Bethlen endowed certain scholarships at Oxford for the benefit of Transylvanian students, who in the time of Milton actually went to Oxford and held the scholarships. If Oxford got and kept that Tran-

sylvanian money it seemed fair that Transylvania should get something from England. Bishop Ravacs did not use this argument. Perhaps Bishop Gore would have been more sympathetic if he had.

That affair, though quite futile, had a good result for me. It brought me into personal touch with Bishop Gore, whom I had long admired, and it was the beginning of a friendship which was sweet to me until that saint and scholar passed away from us.

It also resulted in my undertaking, at his request, to supply some sort of religious ministration for the English people in Prague. It was arranged that I should go to Prague one Sunday in each month. Bernard Sullivan, our Consul at Budapest, consented to be licensed as lay reader and to hold a service in Budapest whilst I was absent.

In Prague we stayed with Sir George Clerk, our Minister there, and Lady Clerk, who on our first visit showed us all the sights and told us a great deal of the history of the place. It was particularly interesting to me because a remote ancestor of mine had gone there as one of the courtiers of the Winter Queen. He was a poet of some reputation in his day, but the few verses of his which I have ever seen seem lacking in the joyous spirit of the Elizabethan age; indeed, lacking in anything which could make them attractive to us. Why that unfortunate Queen took him with her I do not know. Perhaps she wanted a tame poet and could find no other willing to go to Prague.

Sir George Clerk gave me a room in his house in which to hold an early celebration on Sunday mornings. Mattins and Evensong were held in a Hussite church which was lent to us. To such straits is the Church reduced in these strange places.

Prague is, architecturally, a much more interesting city than Budapest, but I did not like the Czechs nearly as much as I did the Hungarians. The Magyar has the mind of a gentleman, the Czech that of a second-rate provincial solicitor. This is not to say that the Czech will not get on in the world better than the Hungarian. Fighting is not the Czech's strong point. But in *Weltpolitik*, as in commerce, it is a drawback to be a gentleman.

At the end of our first year in Budapest, Sir Charles Hawtrey produced my second play, *Send for Dr. O'Grady*, at the Criterion Theatre. That involved me in the hardest piece of work I have ever done in my life. There was something wrong or unsatisfactory about the end of the play and this was not discovered until the rehearsals were going on. Sir Charles wanted me to rewrite the last act. Letters were most unsatisfactory, and I could not understand what the difficulty was, though he wrote fully and telegraphed at great length. I saw that the only thing to do was to go to London. I contemplated flying as far as Strasburg, but was given such alarming accounts of the eccentricities of that line of aeroplanes—it belonged to a Rumanian company—that I decided to do the best I could by train. I left Budapest on Sunday night, after my day's work was done, and travelled as fast as I could, reaching London at 10 p.m. on Tuesday. I had a long talk with Sir Charles, and the next day I shut myself up in an office with an excellent typist and worked hard all day. On Thursday morning I started back to Budapest and arrived in time to do my work on Sunday. It was an exhausting business and, as it turned out, quite useless.

The play was not a good one. The trouble all along

was the end of it, and this was particularly annoying to me, because when I originally wrote it there was a good ending; but the manuscript of that version somehow got lost, and try as I might, I could not remember what the end was. I had to invent a new one and I could not do that either. Yet, in spite of the weakness of the play, it had a fair chance of success, owing to the delightful acting and charming personality of Sir Charles Hawtrey. Indeed, I think it would have achieved a fairly long run, but, to my great sorrow, Sir Charles was taken suddenly ill and died after the play had been running for about six weeks. It was my sad privilege to preach at a memorial service held for him at St. Martin's in the Fields. The memory of his many kindnesses remains with me. I wish I could have seen him oftener and known him better.

I promised, when I went to Budapest, to stay there a year. But at the end of a year my work was not half done and I felt that I ought to stay at least another year, perhaps longer still. I do not think that Ada liked the place, and life for her was very trying, because we could not by any means obtain a house or a comfortable flat to live in. We both detested life in hotels, which, besides, was very expensive. During our first year we obtained half a flat, sharing it with two Jews, a brother and a sister. This was a most uncomfortable arrangement and Ada disliked it greatly. In many other ways life was hard for her. She never cared for living in a city, having a natural hatred of crowds. Yet there were certain compensations for her. We made friends with very interesting and hospitable Hungarian people and everyone in our legation was very kind to us. The operas and concerts were a delight to Ada, who had been starved for music since she married me and took

to living in remote places. Yet I am sure she sacrificed her own wishes when she agreed to spend a second year in Budapest. She was always ready to sacrifice her own wishes for my sake or her children's, above all for anything which I regarded as my duty.

Our second year in Budapest was more interesting, but certainly even less comfortable than our first. Again we tried living in an hotel, this time in the Dunapalota, the Ritz of Budapest. We found that we could not stand it, though the hotel itself was comfortable and we had a good room. We were driven almost to despair in trying to find a flat. In the end we got one. It consisted of a fair-sized living-room, a bathroom and a tiny kitchen. We divided the living-room into two with a movable screen, putting our beds at one end of it and our dining-table at the other end. Our maid slept in a bed which folded up into a cupboard in the kitchen, and when open filled that room from door to wall. Later on we engaged a second maid, but where she slept I do not know. Perhaps they took turns in the folding bed. The bathroom's only window opened into the ventilation shaft of the huge block of which our flat was part. The kitchen had no light at all, except what came in through a glass panel in the door. The living-room looked out on a small courtyard, entirely surrounded by flats like ours, one on top of the other. It was a thoroughly detestable habitation, and in the end, through want of light, air, and above all, view, Ada became seriously ill. All her life she had been accustomed to looking out over wide open spaces, to abundance of fresh air and windows which admitted whatever light the climate provided. From all these things we were cut off in that abominable tenement. The noise made by the children and

musical instruments of the other flat-dwellers (all Hungarians adore their children and are extremely musical) used to get caught in the courtyard and multiply itself by echoing round the walls. There were also smells.

It was small consolation that other people were worse off than we were. We made friends at that time with the Prince and Princess Volkonski, Russian refugees, very charming and very good people, who bore their lot, which was far worse than ours, without complaint. One day, after having tea with us, the Princess took us to see a place where a number of other Russian refugees lived. It was a disused factory, from which all machinery had been removed. There was no means of heating the gaunt, bare rooms and at that time the cold was so great that the Danube was frozen. There was no means of lighting. There was no water, except what the poor people carried in buckets. There was no sanitation. In this place there lived a number of Russian families, men, women and children. They had made little stalls for themselves by hanging up tattered rugs and sheets of coarse canvas. To say that these people lived there is a mis-statement. They died there from every disease that is induced by cold, filth and starvation.

At the end of one of the rooms was a cubicle, a little better than most, for the rugs which enclosed it were not actually tattered.

"This," said the Princess, "is where our chaplain lives, our priest."

I felt deeply and bitterly ashamed of the comparative luxury of our abominable tenement.

I am glad to say that there is a pleasant sequel to that story. I wrote to "Save the Children League" in London

and begged. It was not strictly their business to look after adult Russian refugees, but there were children in that awful charnel-house. They sent me a cheque for fifty pounds, an enormous sum when turned into Hungarian crowns. Next day I met Prince Volkonski in a tram. I handed him the money. He rose from his seat, flung up his hands and said: "Thanks be to God."

Among the various odd jobs which fell to my lot was one which I was singularly unfit to do, the oversight of the finance of the "Save the Children League" in Budapest. It was Mr. Hohler who let me in for that. There had been some muddling of the accounts and perhaps peculation. Mr. Hohler was determined that there should be no more. So was Madam Valkai, an exceptionally able and energetic lady, who was at the head of the work of the League in Budapest. It was no use telling me to keep these accounts straight. A chartered accountant could not have done it, even if he had known the Magyar language. But Mr. Hohler insisted on my trying. It was just possible that my presence in that office once a week and the fact that I ticked off figures with a pencil, might frighten a thief if there was such a person. Otherwise I was totally useless.

What happened was this. The London committee sent over a cheque in sterling. This was changed into Hungarian crowns and lodged in a bank to the credit of the Budapest committee. That committee drew cheques on the account for their various expenses. So far the thing seemed simple. The receipts ought to amount to the same sum as the cheques drawn, and these ought to correspond with the entries in the bank pass-book. I think I could have managed to see that that happened or did not. But there was a snag. The Hungarian Government had fixed a

rate of exchange. A pound sterling could be exchanged for so many crowns and no more. It was illegal to give or receive more crowns for a pound than the Government said it was worth. Men were sent to prison if they were caught breaking that law.

But the pound sterling was worth a great deal more than the Government said it was. That is to say, anyone who wanted a pound, and most people did, would give a great deal more for it than the Government thought right. Naturally, everyone who owned a pound wanted to get as many crowns as possible in exchange for it. The result was that the cashing of English cheques was never carried out through banks or in any open way. If you wanted crowns for your cheque you gave it to a friend who had a friend who knew a man who managed that kind of business, at the bar of the Hungaria Hotel, at cocktail time, in whispers. The price of your pound was fixed between the buyer and the seller by the ordinary haggling of the market without the smallest regard for the rate of exchange fixed by the Government. Usually the price was about double what the Government said it ought to be. Why are Governments so amazingly stupid? Surely by this time they ought to know what King Canute tried to teach his courtiers, that there are some things which even arbitrary power cannot do, and others which it cannot prevent. But the wisest statesmen, goaded on by professors of economics, still regard Acts of Parliament as omnipotent.

It did not seem right that the funds with which Madam Valkai and others were helping the Hungarian children should be reduced by half in order to encourage a Government to be stupid. We defied the law and cashed the cheques which came to us from London in the usual way,

through a friend's friend at the Hungaria bar. But these transactions had to be carried out in the utmost secrecy and no one could produce a scrap of paper containing a record of figures. The penalties were so severe that we were most unwilling to take any unnecessary risk. It was, therefore, never possible to know how much a cheque fetched when sold in that unofficial market. That was the snag which made my oversight of these accounts a hopeless job. I could find out how many crowns were lodged in the bank to the credit of the committee. I could not possibly find out how many crowns the cheque had fetched.

Besides, the accountant of the committee spoke no language but Magyar. Madam Valkai used to translate what he said into German for my benefit, but she did not understand accounts. Then I, who understood neither accounts nor German, certified the weekly balance sheets as correct. I believe that they were correct and that no speculation went on. But the credit of that ought to be given to the inherent honesty of human nature, certainly not to my auditing.

The collapse of a currency is not a pleasant business, and brings incalculable misery to numbers of innocent people. It always seems to come about in the same way. A Government wishes to increase the amount of money in a country and discovers that it can do so by printing notes. It believes that it can control the extent of this inflation and for a time it can and does. Both in Hungary and in Germany no particular harm was done for a year or two. The value of the new money remained stable and nobody suffered except the "rentier" class, people who, it seems, deserve no pity. Then, in spite of hysterical efforts of the Governments and Bedlamite legislation, all control is lost.

PLEASANT PLACES

I saw something of what happened in Germany and a great deal of what happened in Hungary when the control broke down and the money fell in value with increasing velocity until it came to have no value at all. My experiences in Budapest in 1923 and 1924 have made me profoundly distrustful of all meddling with currency, however plausibly defended, however well-intentioned.

I have no wish to describe the misery created in Hungary, especially in great towns like Budapest, by the catastrophic fall in the value of the crown. That is the business of some economist who has a human heart, as well as a professor's head. But I should like to relate one experience of ours which was more comic than tragic.

There came on the people a wild epidemic of gambling, not with cards, running horses or rolling marbles, but with stocks and shares. Men and women speculated with every penny they possessed. Then they borrowed up to the extreme limit of their credit in order to go on speculating. Soon the banks had no more money to lend to their clients, but they were still anxious to go on lending. They offered fantastic rates of interest to anyone who would deposit money with them. At one time they were promising and paying ten per cent per week on deposits. And the security was as good as any security in Hungary as that time. Lending to a bank on these terms seemed a very easy way of making a fortune in a short time. It happened that Ada had some sixty pounds which she had managed to save out of her housekeeping allowance while we were living in France. She turned it into Hungarian crowns and deposited it at a perfectly reputable and reliable bank. It was, I think, the only attempt to grow rich which she ever made. She received week by week her ten per cent and at

the end of ten weeks had doubled her holding of Hungarian crowns. Unfortunately, the value of the crowns was falling as fast as her interest was mounting up. She had doubled her Hungarian money, but when she turned it back into sterling she only just got back her sixty pounds. She was lucky to get even that. If she had gone on a little longer she might have received twenty per cent interest per week, but at the end of three months would have got no more than twenty pounds for her crowns. Later on still she would have been a millionaire in crowns, but would only have owned about seven shillings and sixpence in sterling. Such are the things which happen when money takes to galloping down a steep slope into the abyss.

But we were thinking and caring very little about money when the long winter at length passed and the spring came suddenly on us. Ada fell ill. The doctors called it influenza, a convenient name for any disease which they do not understand. Our flat was a wretched place for an invalid and she was miserable. She was nursed, tenderly and competently, by Mrs. Humphreys, the wife of the commercial secretary in our legation, whose kindness I shall not soon forget. She recovered a little and then relapsed. The same thing happened again, and each time she recovered less and the relapse was worse. I knew perfectly well what the cause of her illness was. The airlessness, the want of light, the noise and the smells of that infernal flat in which we lived had made her ill. I began to despair of her ever getting well again and I could do nothing. A room in a Hungarian hospital would have been worse than the flat.

Then, when things were at their very worst, Mrs. Hohler came to us, like an angel out of heaven, and carried Ada

off in her car to her own house, out of the low-lying Pest to the heights of Buda, out of squalor into luxury. Ada was given a large, airy room, clean and bright, with a wide prospect from windows through which the sun streamed in. Flowers were set in the room, masses of them, and Ada had been starved for flowers. She was fed with food daintily served and attractive. There, in the quiet and the sweetness of that house, she began to recover, slowly but quite steadily. After a while she was able to play with the Hohlers' baby, a great pleasure to her, for she was always delighted in very young babies.

It became clear to me when Ada first got ill that we could not go on living in Budapest. I told Mr. Hohler so and I wrote to the Bishop resigning my position there. I did this with great regret. My work was going on and I really felt that I was doing some little good. The life interested me and the discomforts of that flat did not affect my health. But it was plainly wrong to sacrifice Ada.

We used to make plans for the future while I sat with her hour after hour in that beautiful room in the legation. I promised that whatever happened she should never again be asked to suffer as she did in Budapest. We played with the idea of taking a house in Monte Carlo. We actually entered into negotiations for the possession of an island in the Adriatic Sea. At last we settled on St. Jean de Luz as our next home. Then, utterly unexpectedly, our future was settled for us. It is always so, or always has been so with me. I plan, but some power other than my own plans differently and I am guided into ways I never meant to go and given work I never meant to do.

It happened after Ada had been about a fortnight in the legation that the time came for my monthly visit to Prague.

I went there, and returned, reaching Budapest at 10 a.m., after a long night journey. I went straight to the legation to see Ada. I found her sitting up in a deep arm-chair with a look of joyous excitement on her face, a look I had not seen there for months. In her hand she held a letter which she gave to me with an apology. She did not usually open my letters, though she might have done so had she wished. This one she had opened.

"I thought you wouldn't mind my reading it," she said. "I somehow felt that I could not wait till you came back."

It was a long letter from Sir John Horner, offering me the parish of Mells, which was soon to be vacant.

I have seldom been so greatly surprised. I did not know Sir John Horner, nor so far as I was aware did I know any friend of his. I could not think that he knew anything about me. Yet his letter was clear and definite. "This," so the letter ended, "is a firm offer." It seemed to me almost incredible. The letter told me a good deal about the parish, the work, the church and the rectory. I think I knew in my heart that our future was settled. I think Ada knew too. But we pretended to each other that before deciding we must find out something more about Mells, and something, if we could, about the Horners. Ada consulted Mrs. Hohler, while I talked to the Minister. But they could not help us. They knew no more than we did. I went into the Chancellery. "Jock" Balfour, who was acting as first secretary, was the first who was able to tell us anything about Mells. He believed that he had seen the place once, when he was staying at Longleat. He had been taken to see a view from a famous beauty spot called Heaven's Gate. He thought, but was by no means sure, that Mells was included in that view. Cowan, another

secretary, got out the *Times* atlas, and, astonishingly enough, found Mells marked on the map of Southern England. Bernard Sullivan, at the consulate, knew nothing about Mells, but his father was rector of a parish in Gloucestershire. He at once wrote to him, asking him to drive over to Mells and send us a description of it.

It happened that Robert had just landed in England from America and was with Althea in London. We wrote telling him to see Sir John Horner, who was also in London, and if possible to see Mells.

Then we waited. We did not mind waiting or become impatient, because Ada was getting rapidly better. I am sure that Sir John's letter and the prospect of living in the country again, helped her recovery. Soon I was able to arrange to take her to Abbazia, a watering-place on the northern coast of the Adriatic. I knew that if anything would make her well, the sea would. Before we started we received a telegram from Robert. He had seen Sir John Horner. He and Althea had gone to Mells and had been shown the church, the village and the rectory by Mrs. Asquith, Sir John's daughter, who had a cottage in Mells where she lived with her children. Robert telegraphed: "Don't on any account refuse Mells."

That settled it.

As soon as Ada was well enough to move we left Budapest. It was a trying business, as all good-byes are. Our two little Hungarian maids knelt in the street and kissed our hands, wetting them with actual tears. (The Hungarians are a very emotional people.) We were driven up to the station by Colonel Selby, the head of the military mission in Budapest. Our luggage was taken charge of by Mr. Graepel, my churchwarden, who knew all Eastern

European languages, and was better fitted to deal with the railway officials than anyone else. Mr. Hohler and the members of his legation were on the platform to see us off. So were many other friends. Our compartment was so full of flowers and fruit that there was little room left for us. All the time I was afraid that Ada would break down completely. She was still very weak and the emotional strain of these farewells was great.

Of all our friends in Budapest, the Sullivans from the consulate were the only people who did not see us off. That was because they had gone on before us to Abbazia. There, as once two years before in Budapest, Bernard Sullivan met us at the station and conducted us to our hotel. They had secured for us the best rooms in the hotel and made every preparation for our comfort. Ada found with joy that from the large windows of her bedroom she could look out over a flowery garden and a limitless stretch of blue sea. Days of perfect quiet followed and almost every hour Ada seemed to recover strength and energy. Then, to our great joy, Robert and Althea joined us.

They arrived while we were at luncheon and poured out their news about Mells. About the Horners they could tell us little or nothing. Robert had seen Sir John Horner, but could only say that he was tall and obviously a gentleman, the latter a thing which even a deaf and blind observer could hardly have missed. Of Mrs. Asquith (Katharine Horner) neither he nor Althea would tell us anything at all, which I think was stupid of them, for they had lunched with her and walked round the village with her afterwards. Nor were they much better when it came to telling us about the church. They failed to give me the faintest idea of what it was like. But they were very good

about the rectory. I think they knew that their mother would cross-question them closely about that. Robert had taken a compass with him and could tell us how the house lay and in what direction the windows looked. He could even draw a fairly accurate map of the ground floor. They knew how many apple trees there were in the garden, the extent of the lawns and the size of the grove of nut trees.

Next day Bernard Sullivan received a letter from his father, who had driven over to Mells, and was able to give us a good deal more information.

I repeated to myself, as I have often done before, the words of the Psalmist: "The lot has fallen unto me in a fair ground. Yea, I have a goodly Heritage." And every day Ada regained her strength.

CHAPTER XIV

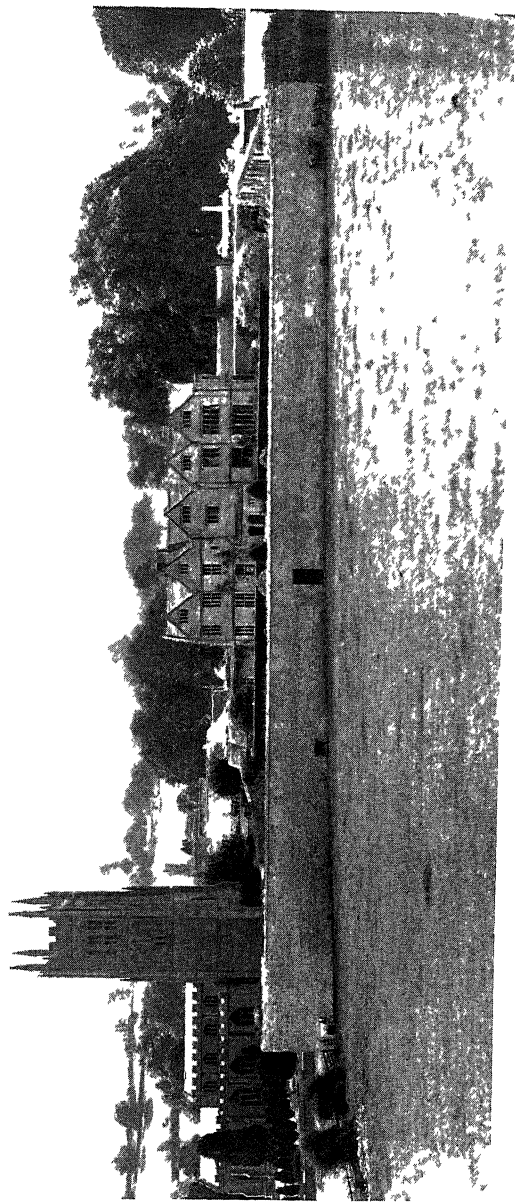
My predecessor in Mells had not left the parish and did not intend to do so for a couple of months. There was no use our going there till he left. We had time to dawdle if we wished to, and that was exactly what we did wish. After a few weeks at Abbazia we discovered a small Italian coasting steamer called the *Tiziano*. She sailed from Fiume, called at the various ports in the Adriatic, went as far south as Malta, touched at the principal Sicilian ports and then, by way of Naples and Genoa, reached Marseilles. She carried very few passengers, indeed during most of the voyage there was only one other passenger, a Hungarian fruit merchant, who spoke no language known to us. The *Tiziano* steamed chiefly by night, unloading and loading cargo all day at her various ports of call. This was exactly the kind of travelling that suited us and I felt sure that it would completely restore Ada to health. This it did.

There were long pleasant days on which we explored strange places and peaceful nights of steaming through warm seas, when the scent of flowers and fruit came wafted to us from the near shores along which we coasted. Most memorably delicious of all was the twenty-four hours we spent anchored in a bay off one of the Lipari Islands. We basked in sunshine on the deck of our steamer, and drank the sweet wine grown on the volcanic slopes of the islands. We landed and walked through groves of orange trees and dark-leaved olives. We discussed with the mate of the

Tiziano the sails of a boat which he had made for himself, in which he actually embarked on the waters of the bay, ruffled by an evening breeze. I think I should have offered to sail with him if I could have found a bathing-dress, the costume he very wisely adopted for going in that boat. There are some boats which only good swimmers should sail in. That was one.

At certain points of our homeward journey letters met us, and these were opened eagerly. Almost all of them contained something, information, advice or warning, about Mells, the subject uppermost in our minds.

These letters made me more and more uneasy and self-distrustful, until I began to wish I had not promised to go to Mells. There were at least two letters from Sir John Horner, very kind, welcoming letters, but they told me about ancient charities administered under trust deeds, about Friendly Societies and other things in which he was interested, but of which I had no knowledge or experience. There were letters from Ada's brother, Arthur Wynne, giving me information about tithes, dilapidations and other parts of the system of the English Church, all strange and puzzling to me. I knew that Parliament was passing or had passed new laws about tithes. I had heard of the Church Assembly, a body founded upon the ideal of life and liberty. It appeared to me to be rapidly destroying liberty in the Church, just as Parliament was in the State, both in the sacred name of democracy. I had, so far, got through life fairly comfortably by ignoring all laws which were not actually forced on me. I feared that as a beneficed clergyman in the established Church of England, I might find myself compelled to obey a great many laws, a most distasteful prospect.



MELL'S CHURCH AND MANOR HOUSE

I began to see, as I read the letters of well-meaning friends, that Mells was a much bigger and more important parish than I expected. One afternoon during the War I sat in a garden in Boulogne with two brother chaplains, Father Aveling, a Roman Catholic, and Mr. Vallance, a Presbyterian. We discussed, as men often did then, what we should like to do when the War was over. My two friends agreed that the ideal life would be that of a rector of a tiny English country parish, with a venerable church nestling among trees at the end of a straggling village street. I pointed out, I remember, that I was the only one of the three who had the faintest chance of realising such a wish. I did not think it likely that I should, but the idea remained in my mind.

I discovered that Mells was not the parish of my dream. There was a great deal more of it than I had contemplated. Perhaps that "incurable laziness," which my old schoolmaster, Waterfield, discovered in me when I was ten years old, made me shrink from the prospect of work. Or perhaps it was a conviction that my active life was over when I left Budapest, and that there was nothing left for me to do but "make my soul" (an Irish peasant phrase) in readiness for the final change.

Then there were friends who warned me that I should never get on with English country people. They were, I was told, cold, aloof, deeply suspicious of strangers and almost incapable of affection. They were profoundly immoral, with the sexual habits of a rabbit-warren. This curious belief is held by town-dwellers of the intellectual classes, the sort of people who write books about rural England. It is entirely without foundation; but I did not know that and it filled me with dismay.

And there was something more. Bishop Gore hinted, and hinted pretty plainly in one of his letters, that although Sir John Horner had offered me the parish, Lady Horner thought his choice unwise, and would rather have had someone else in Mells. Ada's sister, Mabel Druce, wrote even more plainly. A friend of hers, no doubt inspired by the devil, said that my position in Mells would be very difficult. Lady Horner would not get on with me and it was even more certain that I should not get on with her. That friend of Mabel's did not, in fact, know Lady Horner, and had never in her life spoken to me, so her opinion was not of much value. Yet it added to my uneasiness. I foresaw years of bickering with a dominating Lady of the Manor. It was not a pleasant prospect. I had, so I thought, done my share of fighting in life. I was determined not to fight with anyone else about anything and yet—in every man there is a dislike of being trampled on, especially by a woman.

All this made me profoundly uneasy. I think I should have given up Mells if I could have done so with a decent regard for my promise to go there.

We spent a month at St. Jean de Luz, swimming for hours every day, walking for hours, basking in the sun, eating inordinately, sleeping for more than the eight hours allotted by the proverb to the fool. We made our way back to England by sea, finding at Bordeaux a little steamer, hardly larger than the *Tiziano* and almost as pleasant. It landed us at Southampton. We paid a short visit to Winchester to see Seumas, then nearly at the end of his school days. We lingered a little while in London, excited, eager, but very nervous. Then we took train from Paddington and reached Mells.

I remember very well our arrival at the Manor House. Sir John Horner met us at the door and led us round to the loggia, where tea was waiting for us. That loggia I noticed it little then, but I have spent many delicious hours in it since that afternoon. I was scarcely aware of the June flowers blazing in the square-set garden. I saw, but only faintly felt, the tall, many-gabled Tudor Manor House behind us, grey with memories of centuries. I do not remember even noticing the great majesty of the church tower, which came to mean so much to me afterwards.

Lady Horner welcomed us. I was nervous and distrustful of her welcome. I had been warned, and even if I had not been, I should not have been comfortable. Lady Horner is not easy to know and most people are afraid of her at first. She has never told me what her first feelings about me were. Perhaps she felt nothing but mild curiosity, but she possesses a strange power of reading other people's thoughts. Perhaps she knew how nervous I was and how cautiously I shrank from her welcome. It was a curious beginning for a friendship which reached me late in life, but became in the end the deepest and most precious of any friendship I have known.

After tea Sir John took us over to the church. I knew at once, with that strange certainty which is independent of all reason, that I had found a spiritual home, a place in which it would be possible for me—easier than in any other church I had served before—to realise,

“That still communion which transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise.”

Even then I did not feel the supreme beauty of the tower. That came to me afterwards, when I had seen it on sunny days, through mist and rain, while storms swept ragged clouds across it, in sunset glow, in moonlight, or looming through darkness, itself a darker mass. There have been times when I have been drawn out of my house, almost against my will, to look at it. I have been haunted, and still am, by a desire to understand it, to read its message, something more moving and more intimate than the fabled riddle of the Sphinx.

Here is one of my guesses, taken from a story written under the inspiration of the tower. It tells of an interview between the old man, the squire, and a young Anglo-Catholic curate, Father O'Donnell, who had come to the parish on fire to restore to England the Catholic faith. It is the squire who speaks.

"I took him by the arm and led him across the grass, among the graves, till we stood together at the gate which leads into my garden. There, facing us, square and black against the grey sky, was the tower. I felt, as I have always felt, as I had little doubt that O'Donnell felt, its influence.

" 'Look at it,' I said, and O'Donnell, unwillingly, I think, raised his eyes and stared.

" 'That's religion,' I said, 'built up block after block of solid hewn stone by men who knew that the foundations of any enduring thing must rest on the earth. What are you going to do with it? Do you think you can alter it with these newfangled ideas of yours?'

" 'Religion,' said O'Donnell, 'is not built up on earth. It comes down from Heaven.'

" 'You can't,' I said, 'build a tower like that downwards.'

" 'That, I fancy, is the real difference between O'Donnell's

way of thinking and mine. For centuries, in the tradition of the English Church, we have been building up towers, like this stone tower, out of men and women, a great and enduring kind of character, the English character, with the idea of duty towards God and duty towards neighbour, building up on human nature, with an instinct for its weakness and its strength, with the knowledge that the other old builders had of stability and strain and thrust, with the steady earth as the resting place of all our efforts. O'Donnell wanted to go at the thing in another way. I felt that I understood the man. All his copes and incense and genuflections and Masses, and tapers, and bells are only the deckings, quite unimportant in themselves, of a faith which is fundamentally different from mine. He gave me the word which expressed it in a whisper, though I scarcely needed it.

“ ‘I saw the Holy City,’ he said, ‘coming down from God out of Heaven.’ ”

“ ‘Exactly. And I saw the tower built up on plain English ground.’ ”

And here, from the same story, with the same people present, is the tower in a different mood.

“It was half-past six, and we were far on in the month of August. The sun was low and shone with almost level rays against the west front of the church. The outline of the tower, which is sharp against the green sky of the late evening, which is clear-cut in the morning and at noon, was blurred a little by the light which fell upon it. The look of uncompromising rigidity was not there. Instead, there was a sense of graciousness, even of softness. And

the whole splendid front was rich with colour. I have watched our tower at all seasons, at all times of day and night, in all weathers, but never have I seen it so glorious as that evening when O'Donnell and I looked at it together. The capacity of the old stone for taking colour is wonderful. The arch of the west door was dimly violet. The tracery of the window above shone purple round the glass, which flashed the sunlight back to us. The blind panels of the ringing chamber were red. The lattice-work of the bell-chamber and the castellated top of the tower were almost crimson. The pinnacles which rose above the castellation seemed to be touched with gold. The old sense of stable strength was there, but it was strength coloured by some nobler thing, inspired, perhaps, by love."

Intimately connected with the tower are the bells. I first heard them rung on Christmas Eve, six months after I came to Mells. The work of rehangng them had just been completed and the ringers assembled in the tower for the first time for several years. I was thrilled with a strange delight by the only kind of music which has ever moved me much.

The English alone ring bells. Men of other nations only chime them. And the art belongs to the countryside. City dwellers may practise it, but it is not theirs. It is of the soil, indigenous. And of the old arts of the people it alone remains. Their songs and dances, "folk" songs and "folk" dances, are gone and no revivals can bring them back again into natural, spontaneous life. Bell-ringing remains taught by one generation to the next, without the interference of superior people. It is as it was when Bunyan stood in the gloom of the porch listening, his English heart

drawn to the ringers, his poor Puritan soul convinced that art, even this art, is of the devil.

In the ringing-chamber in Mells tower hangs a list of rules for ringers called "The Belfry Articles." I have no means of determining the date of its composition, but I am inclined to think that it belongs to the eighteenth century. It expresses quaintly enough the simple piety of the English countryside and the spirit which has animated generations of ringers. I quote a few verses:

"He that in ringing takes delight,
And to the place draws near,
These articles, set in his sight,
Must keep, if he rings here.

"The first he must observe with care:
Who comes within the door
Must, if he chance to curse or swear,
Pay sixpence to the poor.

"If any like to smoke or drink,
They must not do so here:
Good reason why—just let them think,
This is GOD'S house of prayer.

"He that his hat on's head doth keep
Within this sacred place,
Must pay his sixpence ere he sleep,
Or turn out in disgrace.

"If any should our Parson sneer,
Or Warden's rules deride,
It is a rule of old, most clear,
That such shan't here abide.

PLEASANT PLACES

“The Sabbath Day we wish to keep
And come to church and pray:
The man that breaks the ancient rule
Shall never share our pay.

“And when the bells are down and ceased
It should be said or sung,
And GOD reserve the Church and King
And guide us safely Home.”

It is a great experience to stand in the ringing-chamber, lit by the yellow glow of a low-hung lamp, and watch the men pulling at their ropes, the muscles of their bare arms tense, their bodies bowing to the rhythm of their pulling, their faces grave with effort and delight. It is a great experience to climb higher, to the top-most chamber of all, and watch in the gloom the enormous bells swing over and swing back, their clamour crashing through the darkness, while even the tower itself, steadfast against the shocks of tempests, sways with the music of the peal which is its life. But greatest of all is to stand at night upon some hillside and listen to the bells calling their ever-changing, ever-mysterious tidings of things unseen. Below are the dim cottages, where men sit and women sew and children sleep. The beasts in their byres and stables stand content. Lights glimmer and disappear. Over the cold graves the poor memorial stones gleam faintly white. Life comes in the pain of childbed, throbs awhile and passes. But *vanitas vanitatum* is not the final word. The bells shout triumph, somewhere, somehow, in the end.

In her thrilling story *The Nine Tailors*, Miss Dorothy Sayers shows that her delight in bell-ringing is as great as

mine is, while her knowledge of the subject is far greater. But her emotional reaction differs totally from mine. Perhaps I have not understood her book aright, but it seems to me that ringing brings to her a sense of terror, as if there were something overpowering and evil in the bells. She even in the end accuses them of murder. No such feeling has ever oppressed me. I feel, indeed, the strength which she also feels, but to me it is the strength of faith, which aspires and realises its aspiration. Even the ringing of a muffled peal, which sends shivers down the spine, brings to me something of the spirit of St. Paul's cry of triumph: "I have fought the good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." To me it is angels, not demons, who dwell in the tower among the swinging bells.

Miss Rose Macaulay once wrote a delightful essay on the choice of a religion. It is a witty essay and, like everything witty, is charged with common sense. In it she weighs impartially the advantages and disadvantages of the chief kinds of Christianity, even, I think, of some religions which can scarcely be called Christian.

She ranges from Roman Catholicism to Holy Rollerism, though about the latter faith she does not seem very well informed. Perhaps, like fundamentalism, it scarcely exists outside of Tennessee and few people go there in search of a religion. When she comes to the English Church she distinguishes between the Anglo-Catholic, the Broad, the Low, and the "merely" or "just" Anglican, a people who "like Sunday Mattins at eleven, and services in cathedrals," and do not wish either for reunion with anyone or for disestablishment. It was this "just" Anglican religion which I found firmly established in Mells, supported by the

instinctive and almost unconquerable conservatism of an English village.

I should have found it very difficult to make any noticeable changes. Fortunately, I did not want to. The "mere Anglican" faith and ritual suited me very well. It is not heroic, but—I am a believer in the wisdom of the ancients, *Medio tutissimus ibis*. The Irish evangelical friends of my youth would have regarded Mells as intolerably High Church, perhaps stigmatised our services as "imitation popery," a favourite phrase of theirs. Anglo-Catholics, whose fervency and piety I sincerely admire, say that Mells is sadly Protestant. We ourselves are comfortably unaware of either criticism, a condition of mind which may verge on self-satisfaction, but which certainly makes for peace.

The history of the parish in this matter of faith and practice is peculiar. In the early part of Queen Victoria's reign the Rev. John Horner, a prebendary of Wells, was rector of the parish. He was also squire. In those pleasant days a man who possessed both spiritual and temporal power could do anything he liked in an English village. There was no other power comparable to his. Now, John Horner was an early disciple of the Tractarian school and a believer in the teaching of the Oxford Leaders. It was he who brought Church, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, to Whatley, a tiny parish near Mells, which is in the gift of the Horners. He and Church were friends and there was much coming and going between the two rectories. The fate of Mells was inevitable. John Horner made it, in faith and ritual, what a "Tractarian" parish ought to be.

But Prebendary Horner remained unaffected by the later developments of Anglo-Catholicism. The enthusiasm of the "ritualists" made no appeal to him. He would, I think,

have shrunk from speaking of "high mass" or intending what the words mean. For Mells parish it was "thus far and no farther" under the rule of Prebendary John Horner.

He was succeeded as rector, but not as squire, by George Horner, a fine scholar, a sincere man, but essentially a Puritan, a throw-back perhaps to the ancestor who fought for the Parliament against King Charles and drove a royalist, Laudian rector out of the parish. He was faithful to his father's ideas of churchmanship and made little or no change in the parish. He carried on and completed the work of restoring and refurnishing the church. Considering that this was done in mid-Victorian times, when ecclesiastical taste was at its lowest ebb, the restoration was amazingly inoffensive.

George Horner was out of touch and out of sympathy with the advancing Anglo-Catholicism. The ringing of a sanctus bell at the time of the consecration of the elements deeply offended him, as I, and I fear the Bishop too, had reason to deplore; for George Horner had all the unchanging pertinacity of his family and once he made a protest was inclined to go on making it, undeterred by the fact that nobody heeded. Except that his puritanism exasperated people who saw no harm in smoking or dancing, he left the parish very much as he found it.

His successor, the Rev. E. D. Lear, was also completely out of sympathy with Anglo-Catholic developments, but he was no more inclined to make changes than George Horner was. The result was that I came into a parish which had been, and remained outwardly, Tractarian, but had never got any farther. Once in the very van of progress towards Catholicism, Mells had been left lagging

behind, and I found myself the inheritor of a "mere" Anglican tradition, not the worst of Miss Rose Macaulay's kinds of religion. If anyone ever tells the story of my time in Mells he will probably write me down as another of those who "stay put."

In one thing only I was a little unfortunate. It cannot often happen that a man becomes rector of a parish while two of his predecessors are alive and, having no work of their own to do, take an active interest in the work of their successor. The position was uncomfortable for me and I am sure exasperating for them. It cannot be pleasant to have to stand aside and watch somebody else doing wrong or doing badly. But, indeed, I have little cause to complain. Both my predecessors interfered less than I might reasonably have expected.

Trouble anticipated usually turns out not to be trouble at all. It was so with most of the fears which haunted me before I came to Mells. It was most plainly so, from the very start, with my dread of the people among whom I was to work. They were neither cold nor hostile. They accepted me with a cautious welcome. Not quite at once, but very soon, they were prepared to regard me as, at all events, a possible friend. One thing about them vexed me at first and was a serious trouble to Ada. We had been accustomed almost all our lives to the exquisite manners of the Irish people. In Mayo the poorest inhabitant of some wretched cabin in a bog treats a visitor with a grave courtesy which I have never seen surpassed anywhere. An Englishman's manners are not of this kind. Courtesy seems foreign to his nature. I have seen Ada seriously annoyed when a youth of eighteen years or so has sat in his chair with his hat on, smoking a cigarette throughout the whole

of her visit to a cottage, not even rising to shake hands with her when she said good-bye.

It is only fair to say that the manners of our young men are steadily improving, thanks to the training of the boys by our schoolmaster, Mr. Adams. Courtesy is not the same thing as servility, though Englishmen have a difficulty in grasping the distinction.

But at their worst English manners are not meant to be either rude or insulting. They are one of the defects which invariably attach themselves to virtues. We very soon discovered that the English—I think of every class—almost invariably tell the truth. They have made a habit of it and the effect on a stranger is startling at first. In Ireland everybody lies, not necessarily out of malice or in hope of gain, but because lying is pleasanter and easier than telling the truth. The connection between telling the truth and bad manners is obvious enough. Very good manners are a form of hypocrisy. No one really feels towards a casual stranger all that great courtesy implies.

It was not until trouble came that we discovered the real goodness of the people we lived with. In 1929 the rectory was burned down. The fire was discovered at about three a.m. on Easter Monday. It had been smouldering unseen among rafters in the roof since some time on Sunday afternoon. Its cause and origin are still unknown. My daughter Theo and her husband and children were staying with us at the time. So was Althea, who was the first to discover the fire. She awakened her brother-in-law, who realised the situation at once and rushed upstairs to rescue the three maids, whom he found almost stupefied. But for his promptness they would have lost their lives. Meanwhile Althea rang up the fire brigade. Theo got her

children downstairs. Not till then did anyone awaken Ada and me. We were in a room remote from the fire, so there was really no hurry about us.

In less than an hour the greater part of the village was awake. Theo's children, then very small, were carried off by a friend and put to bed. Young men dashed into burning rooms, sometimes at real risk to themselves, and rescued furniture. Others took charge of valuable things, such as silver, and carried them off to places of security. Women brought cups of tea from their cottages, and seldom was tea more welcome. Others set to work to pack glass and china into cases and hampers. They worked in the dark, on a damp lawn, amid confusion, but they packed every scrap of glass and every cup without a single breakage. Clothes were produced for our maids, who had escaped in their nightdresses, and garments were rescued from the house for Ada, who was hardly in better plight. Everyone worked hard, and worked without shouting or excitement. It was no case of triumph of discipline or organisation, for there was no one to give orders. Everyone seemed to do useful things without being told to. It was not only that everyone wanted to help us. Everyone seemed to know by instinct how to help best and most efficiently.

Occasionally this cool-headed efficiency was carried to a point exasperating to a mere Irishman. There was a dreadful moment when the water supply completely failed and the flames gained ground rapidly. The chief of the fire brigade was making desperate efforts to secure more water somewhere. Everyone was in despair. In the middle of that crisis a friendly man came to me to ask if I would kindly provide him with a bed wrench. Now a bed wrench is the most difficult thing in the world to find, even in a

well-ordered house in hours of complete calm. To ask for, and expect to receive such a thing, in the middle of a raging fire, showed a quiet self-possession which I found it hard to tolerate. Yet the man, if only I could have provided a wrench, would no doubt have saved valuable beds for us.

One incident struck me especially as a proof of the immensely high standard of honesty among English country people. On Easter Sunday the church collections were brought to the rectory. After being counted and the amount entered in a book, the money was put into a drawer in my writing-table. That drawer burst open while the table was being carried out from the burning house and the money—about ten pounds in silver and coppers—was scattered broadcast over the lawn. No one noticed this at the time, but in the grey dawn of the very early morning the village children found it and gathered it into bags. Nothing could have been easier than to take a shilling or a half-crown and keep it. No one would ever have discovered the culprit, had there been one, and they were children to whom a few pennies mean a good deal, for whom half-a-crown would have been wealth. Yet when that money was counted again only four pennies were missing, and these coins I am sure were trodden into the soft grass of the damp lawn. Miss Macaulay's plain Anglicanism has not much to be ashamed of in the morality of the children brought up in that creed.

My daughter Theo is, of all the people known to me, the least "spooky." She shares my bored dislike of "psychical" stories and is profoundly sceptical about all intrusions of the supernatural into ordinary life. But on the occasion of the fire, Theo saw a ghost. She did not at

the moment recognise it was a ghost, which, I think, adds credibility to her story. She was bundling clothes on to her two children immediately after the alarm was given and before anyone from the village appeared on the scene. Down a long passage came a very tall oldish woman, dressed in black, who waved her hands and wept. There was no one in the house the least like that, nor could the description be fitted to any of the women who came to help us in the course of the next hour. The theory—not believed by Theo or me—is that this was the spirit of some deceased rector's wife, who had come from Paradise to mourn the destruction of the home she loved.

It was during and after that fire that I first learned to appreciate the real goodness of the people I tried to serve in Mells. I saw then how much kindness and love lay behind the tongue-tied restraint which I had mistaken for coldness. Afterwards, in a time of real sorrow, I learned, with shame at my own dullness, to understand them better still.

There is a hymn, one of Montgomery's, of no great merit, which contains one good line. It is meant for Ember Days and other times when the clergy are in our minds and prayers. It asks that they—

“May bear Thy people in their hearts.”

That is the priestly ideal, taught by God Himself to Aaron when he hung that mysterious breastplate on the high priest's ephod, fastening it with blue laces. It must be the desire of every true priest. During Ada's long illness and in the black days which followed her death, the parts of priest and people were reversed in Mells. My people bore me in their hearts, not I them.

Another of the fears which troubled me when I came to Mells vanished quickly. Thanks to the kindly tuition of Prebendary Randolph, my rural dean, I came to understand what my legal position was, how legislation about tithes affected me and the full meaning of that dread word "dilapidations." My original opinion of the fussy activities of the Church Assembly—that paradise of men with Archidiaconal minds—was in no way modified, but I found that its legislation did not trouble me much and that a good deal of it can be ignored without unpleasant consequences. There are two or three men who from time to time plead with me over my refusal to fill up totally useless forms, but nothing worse than the breaking of their hearts seems likely to happen and I do not mind that in the least.

In one thing Mells disappointed me and I have not yet quite got over that disappointment. I know that the place is beautiful, but it is not a kind of beauty which appealed strongly to us. The works of man are exquisite, the church, the manor house, the ancient cottages. But nature seemed to us to have been half asleep or very lazy over her share of making Mells. We were told before we saw it that Mells was among the eastern foothills of the Mendips. We expected to find mountains, not very high, perhaps, or rugged, but recognisable as at least hills. We were taken one day shortly after our arrival for a drive which was to end at the highest point on the Mendips. We got there and Ada said: "But when shall we see the hills?" We had lived long under the shadow of Croagh Patrick, with Muilrea behind it. Looking northward we had seen the rounded bulk of Nephin, a mountain about which a proverb says that when there is snow on it there is cold

all over Ireland. Even in Carnalway we were not far from the Wicklow mountains and could if we chose picnic at the foot of Lugnaculla. The Mendips did not seem to us even hills. They were undulating fields, no more.

Also we missed the sea. Ada's heart was sore for thinking of Clew Bay and Carrowholly where

“Out and in and out the sharp straits wander,
In and out and in the wild way strives,
Starred and paved and lined with flowers that
squander
Gold as golden as the gold of hives
Salt and moist and multiform.”

And I was homesick for the black rocks and green waves of the Antrim coast. But this disappointment passed by degrees. We came to recognise a placid beauty of its own in this gentle Somerset landscape. Its very tameness has a wooing charm and after a while our hearts were won and the very quietness grew dear to us. This is, no doubt, what should have happened. Years have gone by and the adventurous spirit of youth has been sobered by their passing. It is fitting, as the poet Wordsworth found, that soberer beauties should bring delight to

“. . . the eye
Which hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.”

In both my Irish parishes I came into distant touch with a world in which the figures of great men of letters were discernible, though remote. When I first went to Mayo, Westport House was unoccupied save by an old house-

keeper, Mrs. Keppel, who had charge of it. I used often to sit with her in her pleasant room lined with great cupboards. Sometimes she gave me tea. Always she told me stories of the great days of Westport House. These delighted me, especially when they were about famous men who had been guests there. Tennyson had been there and I learned that he used to smoke a large black pipe in his bedroom, in those days an outrage on good manners which would scarcely have been forgiven to any less eminent man. In still earlier days Thackeray was there while he was writing his *Irish Sketch Book*. It was from the hill behind the rectory that he looked out over Clew Bay and was moved to write "Peerless Westport."

In Carnalway also I could go back through memories to days when Ruskin was a familiar guest at Harristown. That was when Mrs. La Touche, Percy La Touche's mother, reigned there, a lady who was herself a figure in the literary world of her day. Ruskin designed the lodge at the Brannoxtown gate of Harristown demesne, proving thereby that he was but a poor architect. His ill-fated romance with Rose La Touche had Harristown for its scene. And there were others besides Ruskin whose light shone on Carnalway from the great house.

All these memories made their appeal to me, but they were dim and impersonal. It was not until I came to Mells that the society of men of letters and men great otherwise became anything to me more than one of the "pleasures of imagination." From the very beginning of our life in Mells, Lady Horner—how foolish was my first distrust of her—admitted us into the intimate circle of the brilliant men and women who gather week by week all through the summer in the Manor House.

My very first contact in Mells with a man of real eminence was indirect. A few days after we arrived I was invited to bathe in Lady Horner's beautiful swimming-pool with her and her two grand-daughters. I deplored the fact that I had no bathing-dress. Lady Horner at once offered me one which had been left behind by Lord Haldane. I am not surprised that he left it behind. If it had been mine I should have tried more drastic ways of getting rid of it. It was an abominable garment and not even my pride in wearing what belonged to so famous a man reconciled me to appearing with broad red and blue stripes encircling my body in baggy folds. Often afterwards I saw Lord Haldane, but I never saw him wear that bathing-dress. I have sometimes wondered whether he ever did.

There was one evening spent in his company which I remember with particular vividness. He was at that time Lord Chancellor in the first Labour Government. Lady Horner persuaded him to give a lecture in the reading-room which she had built and presented to the miners in the little village of Vobster. It was a great occasion. The miners, young and old, crowded the room, expectant, but certainly not expecting what they got. Lord Haldane, for an hour, explained to us Einstein's theory of relativity. I held out, with an effort, for a quarter of an hour. After that I gave up trying to understand and amused myself by watching the expressions on the face of a young miner near me. It was respectfully interested to begin with. Then it changed through hopefulness and puzzledness to blank despair, remaining respectful to the very end.

I confessed, in a whisper, to Lady Horner that I could not understand, and was relieved when she whispered

back that she was in no better case. At dinner she asked Lord Haldane why he had done such a thing to us. "It was all quite simple," he said, "a child could have understood it." I realised then that for being a philosopher, as for entering the Kingdom of Heaven, it is necessary to become a little child.

Lord Haldane was the only man I ever met who enjoyed, not merely respected but actually rejoiced in, the Athanasian Creed. He used to come to church with Lady Horner on Sunday mornings whenever he was in Mells. The first time he did so was, as it chanced, a Trinity Sunday and we, true to our "mere" Anglican tradition, recited the Athanasian Creed. I remember wondering what effect that majestic symbol would have on a man baptized and brought up a Scottish Presbyterian. I need not have been anxious. After the service was over he said to Lady Horner—with special reference to the Athanasian Creed—"You never told me it was as good as that." It must be a delightful thing to have a metaphysical mind.

But indeed it is not only metaphysicians who enjoy that Creed. I, at one time, got into the habit of evading that Creed at Mattins on the Saints Days for which it is appointed, when I and a dear old lady were almost alone in the church. She sent me a pathetic little note asking me to read it, saying that it was the greatest comfort to her. Yet I am sure she did not contemplate the damnation of heretics with any particular pleasure.

And there were one or two others who appreciated that Creed. Horace Plunkett used to tell a story of an Irish hunting squire. It was during the days of the revision of the Prayer Book by the Irish Church and the use of

that Creed in public worship came under discussion. One morning while waiting outside of a covert where the hounds were looking for a fox, one of the riders was heard to say, explosively, "I believe every word of the Athanasian Creed and that any one who doesn't believe it will be damned. What's more, if you don't believe he'll be damned, you'll be damned yourself for not believing he'll be damned." Can orthodoxy go further? Yet there are those who doubt whether the Irish Church has quite retained her Catholic heritage.

Mr. Asquith, not yet Lord Oxford, was another guest who was often at the Manor House. He got me into trouble the very first time I met him. Persuaded by Lady Horner, he agreed to read the lessons in church on Sunday morning. A week afterwards it was my duty—somewhat unwillingly—to attend a ruridecanal conference in Frome. The rector of a neighbouring parish cut me dead, deliberately putting his hands behind his back when I tried to shake hands with him and turning his head away when I spoke to him. I was startled, for until then that man and I had been on friendly terms. Afterwards I learned that he refused to have anything to do with me because I allowed Mr. Asquith to read the lessons in my church. It is not, apparently, only in Ireland that political conviction—that clergyman was a Conservative—proves too strong for Christian charity.

I must count myself singularly happy and Mells a fortunate parish, for it was not only at the Manor House and in Lady Horner's company that we met well-known and delightful people. Babington is another house to which I often go. We met Mrs. Knatchbull on the first evening we spent in Mells, for she also was a guest at the

Manor House. She does not live in Mells, but she soon became a valued friend. They say that true friendship must be based on some community of interests. This sounds plausible, but in fact is not true. Mrs. Knatchbull and I have scarcely any common interests. She does not belong to Mells and the "rustic murmur of our burgh" means nothing to her. She is very musical, a brilliant pianist and a composer whose works are well known. I have all my life disliked music and my feeling hardened into actual hatred during my years in Budapest, partly because it was impossible in that city to eat a meal in an hotel or restaurant without being driven into a state of nervous exasperation by the howling of a Tzigani band, partly because Mr. Hohler believed, mistakenly, that he could teach me to love grand opera by making me sit through interminable, and to me quite meaningless performances of Wagner.

Nor does Mrs. Knatchbull care greatly for the things which chiefly interest me. Yet, almost at once, we became friends and the friendship ripened. An evening at Babington is always something to look forward to, even if I know that all the other guests are eminent musicians. The evenings she spends at the rectory are pleasant to me—I hope perhaps to her—even if there are no other guests at all.

It is indeed fortunate for me that friendships can be formed and persist in spite of sharp divergences of tastes and interests. Mells Park is another musical house. It was rebuilt, after a fire, by Mr. McKenna, just at the time I came to the parish. I do not think that Mr. McKenna himself is more than tolerant of music, but Mrs. McKenna is devoted to the art with a fervour which I have never seen exceeded. Charles Lamb says somewhere that he was so,

unmusical that though he often tried to whistle "God Save the King" he never could get within many quavers of it, adding, "Yet hath the loyalty of Elia never been impeached." I turn his saying to my own use. A prolonged concerto played on two grand pianos by four vigorous hands is to me a form of torture. Yet I should deeply resent the casting of any doubt on the sincerity of my affection for Mrs. McKenna.

I think that musical people must be far more tolerant and charitable than I am. I should certainly find it difficult to be intimately friendly with anyone who disliked the New Testament as much as I dislike orchestras. Yet many other friends of mine are musical without detesting me. Dr. Sidney Nicholson has devoted his life and great ability to church music. But we remain on excellent terms. Mrs. Asquith finds a strange delight in hours of piano-playing. Yet I know that she and I are friends. There was an occasion on which I became unexpectedly convinced of this large-heartedness of musicians. There was a dinner party at Mells Park and the long table was almost entirely surrounded by organists. My daughter Theo, like me an unmusical guest, out of place in such company, had been reading the book of Job. She propounded a conundrum. "Who, according to Holy Scriptures, delight in the sound of the organ?" No one knew, though I think someone hazarded the guess that it must be angels. Theo gave the answer, quoting the book of the afflicted patriarch: "The wicked." This was received with a tumultuous applause, the most eminent of all the organists present laughing loudest. Would a company of doctors, or lawyers, or divines have even feigned amusement at such an insult to their—what is it?—Art, science, or trade?

And there are others with whom our friendship ripened but slowly, through my fault, not theirs. Captain and Mrs. Henderson came to Mells later than we did and for a while we did not know them well. It was only when I saw the good work they did, quite unostentatiously, that I learned to esteem them. A better man than I am would have esteemed them sooner. I think that, as has happened often, Ada was their friend before I was. It was the same with George Helps, our doctor. For a long time we knew, really knew, each other only slightly. But the time came when he and I were brought very close together. It was during Ada's last illness. There were nights when we sat together in my study, hour after hour, waiting for the slow coming of the winter's dawn, not knowing whether, when the day came, she to whom he ministered would be with us or not. His devotion and his sympathy broke down all barriers between us, for I saw how tender and loving he could be.

But, though we made many friends, the chief thing in our lives was the Manor House. For a while Sir John was with us, but his strength was failing. He lived long enough for us to know him and I am thankful for that.

Two scenes in which he was the chief figure remain very clearly in my memory. One evening—it was at midsummer—I walked over to the Manor House after dinner, as I often did. Sometimes it was to lure Lady Horner out to look at the tower in the light of the setting sun or by moonlight. But that evening my excuse was that I wanted some information and thought Sir John could give it me. I found him and Lady Horner alone together on the broad paved walk of the square flower garden. They were sitting over the remains of dessert, having dined in the open air.

Sir John pressed a glass of port on me and Lady Horner gave me strawberries. I put my question and got my answer, unhesitatingly, from him. He possessed up to the very end a marvellous memory. In any discussion about facts or figures he was always right, but never left others with the sore feeling that they were wrong. His was the perfect courtesy which counts self-assertion an unworthy thing.

The other scene in which I specially remember him was the occasion of what, I think, was his last public appearance in Mells. It was the afternoon of a bright summer day. The school children had come to the rectory for their summer treat. Tea was over and they were running races in the field behind the house. Many of their parents had gathered to see the sports. Sir John was wheeled over from the Manor House in a long low chair. Lady Horner walked beside him. When the children saw him approaching they stopped their running, stood silent for a moment and then, spontaneously, quite unbidden, cheered. It was the greeting of the Mells of future days to the man who had loved the Mells of the past very well.

Once I sat next to Lord Trenchard at a public dinner in London. He was then Sir Hugh and head of the Air Force. I, who knew nothing about aeroplanes or any other complicated machines, was shy about talking to him; but somehow, before the end of dinner, I found that we were without effort or difficulty discussing rose catalogues. There are people—Lord Trenchard is one of them—who like these descriptive lists of roses. I, though no gardener, enjoy them too. Perhaps if I were to write a list of the men and women whose society I have enjoyed in Mells Manor House it might make pleasant reading. But it

would have to be done in the style which our florists have perfected. "Mr. A., a fine, free talker in suitable surroundings, but needing shelter from east wind of criticism." "Mrs. B., sweetly scented, pale cream colour, but with deep carmine finger-nails. Will blossom anywhere." "Sir C. D., of vigorous habit, but care must be taken not to prune severely. All restraint of natural growth should be avoided." A list of great names annotated in this fashion might make interesting reading. Unfortunately it might turn out to be libellous. It has been my experience that what is meant for a compliment often strikes its subject as an insult. I should mean to write only what is kind and agreeable about people who have all been kind and agreeable to me, but what I wrote might turn out to be unpleasing when it appeared in print.

Besides, there is no need for such a catalogue. Every one of all the many people who have been there will agree with me that the delight of Mells Manor House depends on the personality of the hostess, far more than anything the guests bring with them, however wise and witty those guests may be. Lady Horner comes very near to being the perfect hostess. She does not talk much herself and I have never known her dominate a conversation; but she is mistress of the art of creating the kind of atmosphere in which other people are at their best. She has a sure instinct for knowing when talk is dangerous and—a much more difficult thing to know—when it is needless.

One evening at dinner Lady Oxford was talking, and she is the most brilliant talker I have ever listened to, with the possible exception of Lady Fingall, whose comments on men and things used to delight us in old days at Kilteragh. That evening Lady Oxford chose to talk about

Ireland. There were three Irish people at the table, for I think that Lady Leslie may be counted Irish, through her marriage and because of her long residence in County Monaghan. What Lady Oxford thought and said about Ireland was not what Lady Leslie thought, or what Ada thought, or what I thought. I was conscious of a feeling like that produced by electricity when it bursts suddenly into crackling sparks. There might have been an explosion, for Ireland, as a subject for conversation, is like dynamite. A chance blow, a mere tap, may result in a destructive bang. Then quietly, without noticeable jar, the subject changed. Lady Oxford still talked, but no longer about Ireland, and we listened with untroubled delight. Lady Horner had saved her party and her guests; but even when I thought about the scene afterwards I was unable to discover how she did it.

There was another evening, high summer this time, when there was an unusually large party at the Manor House. After dinner we sat out of doors, in a wide half-circle on the pavement outside of the loggia. Talk flickered, little tongues of it like dancing fireflies. Light faded into the warm dusk of a night in June. The flowers around us lost their brilliant colours. Only the broad blossoms of a near-by medlar tree shone ghostly white. The red glare of a cigar-end showed where a man sat. The movement of a white arm told us that a woman was here or there. The church clock above our heads in the great grey tower chimed every quarter as the hours went by. Voices were unconsciously lowered. Answers followed questions at longer and longer intervals. The great peace of a summer night had us in its keeping, the nearest thing that most of us knew to that other peace which passeth

all understanding. Our talk died away, and Lady Horner was content that it should. Another might have fretted and fussed to "keep things going." She had that higher sympathy which teaches that there are times when things ought not to "go."

All this constant intercourse and her unvarying kindness cleared away the distrust with which I met her first, and after a while my fear of her was less. Our friendship grew stronger, but there was still something lacking for its perfecting.

There is a verse in St. Matthew's Gospel which tells us that at the supreme moment of the sacrifice on Calvary the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Nothing but a tragedy could tear that veil and open to the eyes of men the secret place of the dwelling of the Most High. Great sorrow still does that and nothing but great sorrow can. For those who have been only happy the veil of the Holiest of Holies remains untaken away.

The veil which hangs between the eyes of man and God hangs also between the souls of men. We know each other a little, know the outside of each other, in untroubled times. Always between us and any friend, however intimate, there hangs a veil, impenetrably opaque. But sorrow rends it. St. Paul reckons it as one of the beatitudes of paradise that there we "shall know even as also we are known." And those who enjoy that knowledge must first have passed through "great tribulation."

Lady Horner, if ever anyone, has in her life "been acquainted with grief." The coming of my great sorrow rent the veil which still hung between us and perfected the last and greatest friendship of my life.

PLEASANT PLACES

At the very beginning of her long illness, when Ada lay beside an open window looking out on the water of the bay of Tangiers, she said this to me: "I have all my life wanted love more than anything, and I have had it." With me it has been different. I have not consciously hungered much for love or desired it very deeply. Yet it has been given me and when I thought that I was utterly alone I found that it was mine—the love of my children, of my friends, of my people. Is there anything else which life has got to give comparable to that?

EPILOGUE

I THOUGHT, when I wrote the last words of that last chapter I had finished—finished my book because there would be no more to write about a life which was itself finished. It seemed as if I had nothing before me except a pause before the end. With no fresh work to do I should watch the days pass, noting only the gradual decay of energy, the fading of hope, the passing of one friend after another, with the dread possibility of being left at last *ultimus suorum*.

This is not what has happened. Again, as so often before in my life, the unexpected has come to me. Early in the Spring of 1934, the Dean of Westminster asked me to take charge of the parish of Holy Trinity, Prince Consort Road. For a long time I hesitated. The change, if I made it, meant the severing of ties which had become very dear to me. I should spend my days no more among people whom I had learned to love and, loving, to know. I should walk no more among the leafy lanes of Mells or go day after day to say my prayers in the most beloved of all churches, or stand on the hallowed ground, to me most deeply hallowed, under the shadow of the great tower. My work, if I accepted the charge offered me, would be new work, of a kind I had never done, for people whose ways and thoughts I did not know. It would require—this was my great fear—more energy, more spiritual freshness than I had got to give.

All this made me hesitate; and for once in my life, only

this once, it seemed as if I should have to choose for myself, that this time I should not be forced to go whither I had not willed. But this mood of hesitation passed. It seemed in the end certainly better that I should leave Mells—bitter as the parting was—and attempt the new work—doubtful as I felt of my ability to do it.

Now I am glad. The change has not meant the breaking of old friendships, certainly not any interruption of the steady strong flow of the best of all my friendships. I have met with welcome, far warmer than I could have dared to hope, from people who knew nothing of me beforehand nor had any reason to trust me. I have found work, new indeed, but delightful, if only I am able to do it. And, strangely enough, there has come to me fresh energy. I have learned that there is still something for me to do, hopes on which to fix my eyes and love to stay and strengthen me. Can a man ask more in the evening of his days? Has any man—I least of all—the right to expect so much?

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